Daily Report

Latin America

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CONTENTS

NOTICE TO READERS: An * indicates material not disseminated in electronic form.
An Ω indicates a Foreign Media Note.

INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS

Human Rights Group Asks Mexico To Avoid Ethnic Cleansing *[Quito Radio]* 1

CARIBBEAN

Cuba

Canadian Delegation Meets Foreign Trade Minister *[Havana Radio]* 2
Robaina To Leave Ghana for Angola 11 Jan *[Havana Radio]* 2
More on Robaina's Schedule *[Havana Radio]* 2
Raul Castro Western Army Tour Concludes *[Havana TV]* 2
Raul Castro Reassures Disabled Officer *[Havana Radio]* 3
Changing Role of Trade Unions Viewed *[Havana Radio]* 3
Increase Expected in Matanzas Oil Production *[Havana Radio]* 4
Social Security System Expenses Increased in 1993 *[Havana Radio]* 4
* Bolivians Benefit From Organ Donors *[La Paz PRESENCIA 24 Nov]* 4
* Doubts Regarding Self-Employment Countered *[TRABAJADORES 6 Dec]* 4
* Financing TV Programming. Ads Discussed *[JUVENTUD REBELDE 5 Dec]* 5
* Garbage, Dirty Streets in Havana City Reported *[BOHEMIA 26 Nov]* 6
* Book Reports Black Market Language, Statistics *[BOHEMIA 26 Nov]* 7
* Equality, Changes in Pay Scales Viewed 8
* Economy Requires Changes *[TRABAJADORES 22 Nov]* 8
* Material Incentives' Support *[TRABAJADORES 6 Dec]* 9

Haiti

Opening of Parliament Previewed *[Port-au-Prince Radio]* 11

St. Lucia

New Organization To Manage Banana Industry *[CANA]* 11

Trinidad and Tobago

Government 'Will Not be Pressured' by Muslimeen *[CANA]* 12
Former Security Advisor Appointed Ambassador to Korea *[CANA]* 12

MEXICO

Salinas Meets Salvadoran, Honduran Presidents *[Mexico City Radio]* 13
President Salinas Announces Cabinet Changes *[Mexico City TV]* 13
Attorney General's Office Announces New Appointments *[Mexico City TV]* 14
Colosio Continues Campaign, Meets With Railroad Union *[Mexico City TV]* 14

Chiapas Crisis

Politicians Question Handling of Uprising *[Mexico City Radio]* 14
Document Profiles Zapatist National Liberation Army *[Mexico City TV]* 15
Officials Confirm Low Surveillance at Border *[Mexico City TV]* 16
Paper Claims Former FSLN Guerrilla Heads EZLN *[LA PRENSA 9 Jan]* 16

PGR Denies Giving Daily List of Rebel Leaders *[Mexico City TV]* 17
Pursuit of Rebels Continues in Altos de Chiapas *[Mexico City TV]* 17
Rights Activists Turned Back Near San Cristobal *[Mexico City TV]* 17
Attorney General's Office Remands 8 Rebels *[Mexico City TV]* 17
Human Rights President Reports to Salinas *[Mexico City TV]* 18
Candidates Review Chiapas Events *[Mexico City TV]* 18
Security Measures Cited in State *[Mexico City TV]* 18
Poverty in Chiapas Seen as Major Source of Strife *[Mexico City TV]* 19
Army Preparing Large Offensive Against Rebels *[Madrid EFE]* 19
Mayor's Office Increases Security *[Madrid EFE]* 20
EZLN Releases 80 Social Security Workers *[Madrid EFE]* 20
Rejects Government Dialogue Conditions *[AFP]* 20

CENTRAL AMERICA

El Salvador

President Cristiani Gives Message to Nation *[San Salvador Radio]* 22

Guatemala

Two Bombs Linked to Mexican Conflict Explode in Capital *[Guatemala City TV]* 23
Government Condemns Attack *[ACAN]* 23
Government, URNG Agree To Resume Peace Talks *[NOTIMEX]* 23
Menchu Declines Invitation To Mediate in Mexican Crisis *[ACAN]* 24

Nicaragua

Legal Assistance Director Reads List of New Cabinet Members *[Managua Radio, TV]* 24
Chamorro Speaks at Ceremony *[Managua Radio, TV]* 25
Chamorro Speaks at Opening of National Assembly Session *[Managua Radio, TV]* 26
Cosep President Urges UNO To Rejoin National Assembly *[Managua Radio]* 31
Central Bank President on 'Totally Honest' Gold Sale, Need for Foreign Aid *[Managua TV]* 32
* German Organization Assists Coconut Growers *[LA PRENSA 14 Dec]* 32
* Evangelicals Withdraw Support From PJN *[LA PRENSA 15 Dec]* 32
* Labor Conflicts, Statistics Reported *[LA PRENSA 19 Dec]* 32
* Organization Promotes Peace in Chontales *[BARRICADA 26 Dec]* 33

Panama

Perez Balladares on Ruling Parties' Alliance Failure *[LA PRENSA 6 Jan]* 33
Molirena Legislators Propose Alliance *[EL PANAMA AMERICA 8 Jan]* 33

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina

Menem Blames Mexican Chiapas Uprising on 'Mercenaries' *[NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS]* 34
Menem: Country Will Remove Mines in Falklands, UK Will Pay *[NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS]* ... 34

Bolivia

President to Attend Mercosur Summit in Uruguay 16-17 Jan *[La Paz TV]* 34
Ω * **Bolivia: Socioeconomic Briefs** *[LOS TIEMPOS 7 Nov, etc.]* 34

Brazil

Rio Group Executive Secretariat Transferred To Brazil *[O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO 8 Jan]* 35
Labor Minister Walter Barelli Joins PSDB *[Brasilia Radio]* 36

Chile

President-Elect Frei Undergoes Planned Surgery *[Santiago TV]* 36
Report on International Human Rights, Democracy Conference *[Madrid EFE]* 36
'Concern' Over Chileans Convicted of Terrorism in Peru *[Santiago Radio]* 37

Colombia

Consul Reports on Downed Venezuelan Helicopter *[Santa Fe de Bogota TV]* 37

Ecuador

President Duran-Ballen Makes Changes in Cabinet *[Madrid EFE]* 38
Defense Minister on Efforts To Counter Guerrilla Activity *[Quito Radio]* 38
Government Continues Nonpayment of Foreign Debt *[Quito Radio]* 39

Paraguay

Army Publication: Wasmosy Receives 'Orders' From Oviedo *[NOTICIAS 10 Jan]* 39
Deputy Denounces Government Threat To Take Over Party *[ULTIMA HORA 10 Jan]* 39

Peru

Officials Cited on Friction With U.S. Over Human Rights *[Madrid EFE]* 39
Shining Path 'Leader' Rejects Guzman's Orders *[Madrid EFE]* 40
Drug Producing, Trafficking Spreads Throughout Country *[Madrid EFE]* 41

Venezuela

Minister Announces VAT Executive Decree, Price Ceilings *[Caracas TV]* 42
* Distribution of Household Spending Detailed *[EL UNIVERSAL 28 Nov]* 42
* Regional Fund Grants Development Loans *[EL UNIVERSAL 2 Dec]* 43

Guyana

Trade Union Congress Reschedules Protest for 13 Jan *[CANA]* 44

Human Rights Group Asks Mexico To Avoid Ethnic Cleansing

PA0701124494 Quito Voz de los Andes in Spanish 2300 GMT 6 Jan 94

[From "The Voz Andes" newscast]

[Text] Quito—The Latin American Human Rights Association [ALDHU] has called on the Mexican Government not to implement scorched earth or ethnic cleansing policies to deal with the current violent situation in Chiapas State, Mexico. The Mexican state, one of the most powerful in Latin America, has enough operational and military instruments to resolve this situation without having to resort to scorched earth or ethnic cleansing policies, according to Chilean Juan de Dios Parra, executive secretary of the ALDHU.

The expression scorched earth refers to the use of intense military bombings to eliminate all traces of human, animal, and plant life in a specific area. Ethnic cleansing refers to the elimination of a certain race.

Parra also added that the peasant rebellion of the past six days in Mexico is doomed to failure and that more than 500 people have been killed, most of them innocent civilians. According to ALDHU spokesman Cesar Mosquera, the figure of 500 dead was obtained by the organization after telephone conversations with Mexican human rights organizations. Official figures from Mexico have only reported the killing of 102 people even though Catholic Church sources in Mexico estimate the number of people killed could reach 400.

Clashes between the Mexican Army and peasants from the so-called Zapatista National Liberation Army have been going on since 1 January.

Cuba

Canadian Delegation Meets Foreign Trade Minister

FL1101002894 Havana Radio Reloj Network in Spanish 2032 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Text] Nova Scotia Prime Minister (John Savage) and the delegation of Canadian businessmen and entrepreneurs accompanying him on his visit to Cuba met today with Cuban Foreign Trade Minister Ricardo Cabrisas. The Canadian delegation was invited to visit Cuba in light of the interest the Canadians have displayed in investing in the island. The delegation was accompanied by Canadian Ambassador to Cuba (Mars Entueste). Cabrisas spoke to the Canadian guests of the economic problems Cuba is confronting and its causes as well as the weather problems that affected the country last year. Cabrisas praised Canada's respectful attitude toward Cuba. (Savage) thanked Cabrisas for his hospitality and expressed his delegation's interest in doing business with Cuba and investing in the island. The Canadian guests have expressed an interest in ecotourism and the soap and lumber industries.

Robaina To Leave Ghana for Angola 11 Jan

FL1001144894 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1255 GMT 10 Jan 93

[Text] On 11 January, Cuban Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina and his delegation will depart for Angola according to the work schedule for his two-week-tour, which also includes Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Namibia.

Today, 10 January, Robaina will meet with President Jerry Rawlings and other personalities in Ghana.

More on Robaina's Schedule

FL1101022794 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 0000 GMT 11 Jan 94

[Text] Cuban Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina is on an official visit to Ghana. Upon arrival, he was greeted by Ghanaian Foreign Minister Obed Asamoah. In Ghana the Cuban foreign minister begins his five-country tour that will include Angola, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Namibia. During his 48-hour stay in Ghana, Foreign Minister Robaina will meet with Ghanaian President Jerry John Rawlings and other high-ranking Ghanaian officials. Robaina also will meet with members of various friendship organizations as well as with the Cuban ambassadors to Cape Verde, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria, Benin, and Burkina Faso.

Raul Castro Western Army Tour Concludes

FL1001142294 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks in Spanish 0100 GMT 10 Jan 93

[Text] Today was the last day of Army General Raul Castro's tour of the Western Army. The inspection, which began in December, began today with a visit to the San Antonio de los Banos Air Base. Politburo member Jose Ramon Machado Ventura; Division General Leopoldo Cintras Frias, chief of the Western Army; and Candido Palmero, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba [PCC] in Havana, as well as other secretaries, ministers, and PCC officials, accompanied Castro.

The briefing on the combat readiness of the base was presented by Colonel Marrero Hernandez, chief of this historical air base which opened fire against the mercenary planes on the eve of the Bay of Pigs invasion and from which our scarce planes and intrepid pilots departed to confront the enemy in the Bay of Pigs. This base's revolutionary fire also frightened the U.S. from its overflights during the October Crisis. Despite special period difficulties, this large air and anti-air unit maintains its combat readiness and the spirit of struggle from those glorious days. It is also known for its pilots' participation in internationalist missions in Ethiopia and Angola.

Castro showed interest in learning of the personnel's living conditions, food, housing, and other aspects of life on the base. He was told of a recent presentation of homes, and the progress made in several dozen more, which are to be completed this year. The food situation is improving to the extent that the unit's farming program develops, thanks to the unit's self-sufficiency efforts. They presently have over 700 hectares of arable land within the base's perimeter. Castro stated: "Let there not be a single corner left unplanted."

Raul and his companions expressed interest in the characteristics of several planes. Lieutenant Col. Perez Perez, who had been a Camilito student, and later an internationalist-mission ace pilot, explained the capabilities of the antisubmarine helicopter [Mi-14] and Mig-29 [Fulcrum] fighters. An intense emulation program exists among the diverse Western Army maintenance units and those that contribute to the construction of extensive fortification projects such as the Sugar Industry Ministry, the Agriculture Ministry, and the Blas Roca Contingent.

Raul presented emulation awards to a brigade of the Blas Roca that is working on project No. 70, and to the company working on project No. 26 in the depths of the earth of the fatherland. Both units surpassed their 1993 plans, as well as the required quality parameters. Raul extended warm words of experience to the dedicated soldiers and civilian workers, and toured the underground facility that will be completed this year.

At the well-known Sonrisa de la Victoria Camp of Farm No. 2 of the Guira de Melena Miscellaneous Crops Enterprise, Raul and his companions conducted a thorough analysis of the work of the Youth Labor Army [EJT], which took over the management of this enterprise two months ago. The positive changes effected during this brief period were emphasized. The EJT has implemented a new annual plan structured according to

week, type of farm, and crop; production and consumption norms, and a workday never shorter than eight hours. The plan will be adjusted to changing conditions resulting from increases in productivity, weather, shortages, and other factors. This farm has approximately 39 caballerias of fertile soil, and is 95-percent irrigated. The annual plan foresees producing 11,500 tons of tubers, grains, plantains, and garden vegetables. The work force consists of 221 EJT soldiers and 62 farmers. Over 91 percent of the workers are directly involved with the land. Seventy percent of the fuel will be used for irrigation, only 20 percent for agrarian machinery, since 31 ox teams will reduce the need for tractors. The remaining 10 percent will be used mainly for transportation, plus a minimal amount for administration work.

According to Division General Rigoberto Garcia Fernandez, chief of the EJT, this situation is repeated in another 19 farms under EJT management, which is 40 percent of the state lands used for miscellaneous crops in Havana. The EJT has about 5,000 soldiers and regular workers in the province. The plan for 1994 is to surpass 4.5 million quintals.

Another aspect analyzed in the meeting was the fight against crime and the operation of the Unified Vigilance and Protection System, based on the experiences of Guira de Melena municipality, and on the premises of the report presented by PCC provincial leader Pedro Zaez.

The presence and contributions of Division General Carlos Fernandez Condin, Interior Ministry first vice minister; Justice Minister Carlos Amat; Supreme Court President Jose Raul Amaro; and Attorney General Juan Escalona enriched the discussion of this important issue which is more critical in a large food production area so close to the capital. A resolute effort against crime was noticed. It was stressed that the understanding of the mode of operation of cattle rustlers and agrarian product thieves should result in more specific measures within the framework of Cuban law.

Raul spoke briefly to the farmworkers, told them of the ideas discussed at the meeting, and expressed his hope for them to achieve new and better work results, productivity, resource conservation, cost reductions, and high agrarian yields to benefit our people's food needs.

Raul also briefly visited the Western Army intelligence unit where he was briefed on how this unit satisfactorily fulfills its mission. Raul showed great interest in the diverse facilities of the unit, and its outstanding and sophisticated equipment for the mission of discovering the enemies' plans for aggression against Cuba. Raul also observed a dexterous demonstration of martial exercises by the troops.

The final stop in the tour was a visit to an antiair regiment where a brief demonstration of the operation of a modern SAM [surface to air missile] unit was observed. Central Committee members Eusebio Leal and Felipe Perez were invited to attend this final leg of the itinerary.

The minister's final words, closing the extensive tour, were brief and eloquent: "The Western Army is in outstanding shape and is successfully fulfilling the five strategic goals of the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces. The western part of Cuba, as well as the entire island is an undefeatable bulwark."

Raul Castro Reassures Disabled Officer

FL1001144994 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1255 GMT 10 Jan 93

[Text] Army General Raul Castro promised Lieutenant (Elmis Brooks Shivas) that he would continue to be an active officer of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, despite the accident in which he lost a leg trying to save four individuals who were trying to leave the country.

Changing Role of Trade Unions Viewed

FL1001220394 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1800 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Text] We are witnessing the final hours of formalism in the practice of the Cuban labor union movement. We no longer patiently accept the repetitive rhetoric uttered by those who are constantly emitting general slogans but who barely broach the specific and objective reality on which they should act. This is the opening sentence of the editorial printed in today's TRABAJADORES newspaper entitled: "Who Are the Drafters of Our Policies?"

The editorial continues: We are not talking about the labor unions getting away from politics and ideological work. It is time that we realize the labor union movement's singular political responsibility for education in the battle for survival, as well as for later, when we enter a world that will be different in many ways.

The editorial points out the need for labor unions to be part of all of today's and tomorrow's political battles. The editorial underscores: It is necessary to be on the offensive at all times. The time when the tradition was to wait for the decisions from the top for every movement and every action is over. The article reaffirms: That is why we proudly salute all the labor union leaders who have been struggling decisively to maintain a high level of morale, discipline, and order in their work centers.

The editorial goes on to say that nothing can be more demoralizing than idleness, indolence, negligence, shoddiness, the lack of control over production costs and other expenses, embezzlement of resources, and the waste that characterizes the atmosphere of some work centers. The editorial stresses: The objectives and general principles by which the workers and their labor union representatives should guide themselves have already been established. These principles stem from an analysis of the situation the country faces and the predictable path we will have to travel to change it.

It is necessary that the labor union leaders assume their role of revolutionary activists, their role as leaders capable of explaining to and informing workers of the

general situation of the country and what the workers can do at their work centers to fight back and improve the situation. The article also refers to the need to profoundly debate the topics related to financial organization, because what is being attempted has to be congruent with the idea that workers are the owners; therefore, the solutions should be based on the consensus of the work force.

Increase Expected in Matanzas Oil Production

PA1001164094 Havana Radio Havana Cuba in Spanish 0000 GMT 8 Jan 94

[Report by Wilfred Alayon from Matanzas for the "Evening Information Review" newscast]

[Text] Petroleum production in the country during 1993 amounted to 1.1 million tons, 70 percent of which came from the oil fields in Matanzas Province.

The total amount produced in Matanzas was 814,000 tons, which is equal to 7.15 million barrels. All these amounts are records, both for Matanzas and on a nationwide level, despite the fact that it is still not enough to meet the country's requirements. That is because approximately 90 percent of the electricity in Cuba is produced by thermoelectric generators, which have been adapted to use domestic heavy crude oil, and this represents slightly more than 30 percent of the fuel consumed.

It is therefore important to understand the enormous responsibility of the Central Petroleum Extraction and Drilling Enterprise, which is in Cardenas Municipality in Matanzas Province, 150 km east of the Cuban capital. That enterprise makes the largest contribution to the country's oil production.

The enterprise of the Yumuri area is made up of approximately 2,000 men, including specialists, workers, and administrative personnel, all highly qualified and experienced people.

This year the development of the gas-oil program will be subject to the conditions of the current financial situation, which is why a slight increase in the extraction of the so-called black gold is foreseen.

However, in light of the financial problems, the country's directorate decided to take measures to provide more facilities for the producers of Matanzas Province. This, together with the solution of the technical problems that kept the foreign associates from attaining the production goals estimated for the oil wells directly operated by them, will allow us to maintain a sustained annual increase in the extraction of hydrocarbons.

Social Security System Expenses Increased in 1993

FL1101002994 Havana Radio Reloj Network in Spanish 2051 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Text] According to estimates, in 1993 the Cuban Government paid 1.371 billion pesos in retirement and pension benefits and approximately 250 million pesos in maternity, accident, and sickness benefits. More than 1.271 million people received social security benefits in 1993, 53,000 more than in 1992. Every year, and despite the country's serious economic limitations, the social security expenses increase as do the number of people who benefit from this system. It is expected that 1.693 billion pesos will be allocated to the social security system in 1994. More than 1 billion pesos will be used to cover retirement and pension benefits.

* Bolivians Benefit From Organ Donors

94CA0055A La Paz PRESENCIA in Spanish 24 Nov 93 p 7

[Text] Cuba's cooperation with Bolivia has solved the serious health problems of about 5,000 [Bolivian] children. Furthermore, "many Bolivians are walking about with Cuban kidneys," Cuba's ambassador, Angel Gustavo Bruguez Perez, said yesterday.

At the end of a formal farewell visit to Bolivian President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, the Cuban diplomat completed his mission with a report on his 10 years in La Paz.

He spoke of the health care programs his country's government has supported in Bolivia, including the establishment of three intensive care facilities for children in the cities of La Paz, Santa Cruz, and Sucre, where the lives of 5,000 children have been saved. He said that thousands of Bolivian citizens are now walking about with Cuban kidneys. These people went to Cuba for specialized medical treatment.

Bruguez was decorated with the "Condor of the Andes" medal with the Great Cross, in recognition of his work to benefit Bolivia during the 10 years he headed his country's diplomatic legation.

Certain that he will return to Bolivia, the diplomat said he will again stroll along Avenida Buenos Aires or the Rodriguez Market. He said he has established a home in La Paz and that his children are studying in Bolivia. He also spoke of Cuba's cooperation in sports, especially for Bolivian participation in the Bolivar Olympic Games.

Minister of Foreign Relations Antonio Aranibar said: "Despite the enormous difficulties facing the Cuban people, their government has provided significant cooperation in the fields of education, health, and sports."

* Doubts Regarding Self-Employment Countered

94CA0055B Havana TRABAJADORES in Spanish 6 Dec 93 p 11

[Article by Iliana Hautrive]

[Text] Slightly less than three months after the reintroduction of self-employment in Cuba, results can already

be seen in attaining its primary objectives: satisfying the population's needs, providing jobs, and generating state revenues.

A recent evaluation by the National Assembly deputies on the economic affairs committee showed that with the passage of time after the implementation of Decree-Law 141, the self-employment phenomena are growing increasingly complex, which means that activity is expanding, not the contrary.

The greatest achievement of this measure was certainly eliminating needs not being met by the state, and helping to reactivate the national economy. Among other things, it provides another outlet in Cuba's present imperfect and difficult situation.

This effort requires constant modification to continue seeking a happy medium, whose essence consists in not drifting toward capitalism, but instead developing a Cuban formula in order to comply with the fundamental principles that have given it life.

Over 106,000 applications have so far been made, and of these almost 87,000 were approved; fewer than 2 percent were rejected. This shows a trend toward greater openness in this area.

The status of workers who were self-employed some years ago is also favorable, and while the number of approved occupations has been increasing, it seems promising that studies are continuing for the approval of others, and also of occupational sectors that may be included as suitable for self-employment.

With ups and downs related to the particular features of each area, the matter of supervision is now a topic of debate. In some places, like Holguin and Granma, inspections and procedures have been established, but that has not been done in all provinces.

I believe the city of Havana merits different treatment, but there is no doubt that the legal instrument now being prepared by the State Finance Committee will provide a positive mechanism for dealing with possible violations.

Moreover, more than a few people believe that self-employment foments the diversion of resources and other forms of crime, and the strict controls of which we are speaking must also deal with this vital issue. Still, I agree with those who think the negative phenomenon of theft was present before the implementation of Decree-Law 141, and now it should disappear with more stringent controls.

The issue of prices is also controversial, with a range going from a pair of earrings for 10 pesos up to a small carton of fried rice, pork, meat, or salad, which may cost 70 pesos, depending on the province, day, and category of the place of sale, as is frequent in the Paladar network—recalling the unforgettable Raquel of "Vale Todo" ["Worth It All"]—so well known in the city of Havana.

I agree that some prices are too high, but prices are subject to the laws of supply and demand, in which prices cannot be managed. They will regulate themselves as the situation stabilizes and there will be greater satisfaction of needs.

In one essential oversight—which may include strong fines and even confiscations—consideration is being given to the future application of a variable progressive tax on personal earnings. Sales and services for foreign currency, which are damaging the meaning of self-employment, also need to be scrutinized more carefully.

Taking a positive view, I think of the hundreds of thousands of workers who, because of the necessary layoffs in search of greater efficiency, may find an occupation and employment in this activity, not to mention people of diminished capacity, those without jobs, housewives, and retirees; all these people will ensure a good selection.

I am also thinking of the revenues that may be provided for next year's state budget; the program may also help to improve finances and reduce the excessive amounts of cash in circulation in Cuba.

In a preliminary accounting, self-employment seems to be working, though it has its weak points because of the short time it has existed. Soon improvements will be made, and there will be more complete control; the workers' movement may also focus on this new labor sector.

And of course, when the National Assembly of the People's Government examines the application of Decree-Law 141, the debate will be enriched and the Cuban economy will move toward the consolidation of another necessary measure that will be of great benefit in our immediate future.

* Financing TV Programming, Ads Discussed

94CA0055C Havana JUVENTUD REBELDE in Spanish 5 Dec 93 p 4

[Article by Carmen Caminas]

[Text] The trial move toward commercial advertising, initiated on an experimental basis by Cuban television during the broadcasting of the Central American and Caribbean Games, is one of many self-financing approaches the media may use.

Television is an institution that has been totally subsidized by the Cuban state in both its national currency and its convertible currency costs. It is now advisable to seek new ways of pursuing its educational, cultural, and informational mission.

For some years television, through the INTER TV organization, has been working on a self-financing system, but it is still quite far from meeting television's very expensive financial needs.

The income that has to date been generated from the sale of technical services and of some Cuban programs to foreign agencies is still not sufficient to cover its short-term requirements.

Starting in 1993 they began to look at other ways of increasing services at competitive prices to major productions of foreign organizations, including cinema, and they will begin coproductions in which television will receive dividends based on its participation.

One example of this is the production of a series set in Cuba and the Caribbean with a Spanish television company, in which Cuban television will provide the talent and equipment without payment having to be made in convertible currency.

Other possibilities are dubbing and subtitling. This is available to date in up to seven languages. The potential of film archives is also being explored. There is a great wealth of images, and this product carries a high price per minute. The marketing of sound archives of productions that are the property of Cuban radio and television has also not been ruled out. These activities also include the start of the production of advertising, intended especially for foreign organizations.

This is taking place at a time when there are foreign capital investments in Cuba, and mixed public-private enterprises are being formed with Cuban groups. The inevitable products, firms, and commercial brands of a number of internationally known companies are beginning to appear. Most of these companies have good budgets for promotional costs, publicity, and public relations.

One part of the media that could most benefit from this is radio and television. How it should be done requires intelligent handling.

Juan Hernandez, vice president of ICRT [Cuban Institute of Radio and Television], told me some time ago that one of the strong points of Cuban television is precisely that it is not commercial or subject to the will of advertisers who in other television stations decide on its fate. So including ads in ours may seem contradictory. However, within the array of publicity available, we will select ads that seek to enhance a company's image, emphasizing its social orientation. In that way the viewer receives a pleasant, nonconsumerist image that may often become a message promoting behavior that will benefit families and society.

This is done through sponsorship, in which an advertiser helps to finance a broadcast in exchange for his participation being mentioned.

Using this concept, and based on experience with sports broadcasting (where internationally the presence of active publicity has become inevitable), and given the high costs of satellite transmission of sports events, Cuban television decided to experiment with the Central American and Caribbean Games and seek sponsors.

Foreign firms and associated Cuban groups responded to this invitation and—apparently—everyone benefitted. This commercial opportunity was especially advantageous for Cuban groups, most of which have very limited budgets for presenting their image.

According to the president of Cubanacan S.A., Abraham Maciques, it is necessary to boost the image of merchandise that is not advertised and, therefore, not sold. For the corporation he heads, investing about $8,000 in the television promotion in Ponce may mean a great deal in the future, since all over the world major tourist attractions invest 10 percent of their profits in activities of this nature, while Cubanacan has only spent 2 percent. Canada now spends about $400,000 on promotional advertising to attract 110,000 tourists, and a much higher amount needs to be spent to induce a German to choose Cuba as his destination.

The experiment with the Central American Games in Ponce proved successful economically, and the impact on the population was examined in social surveys.

There were varied responses, ranging from "I was not surprised," or "this is normal in sports arenas," to "it makes the broadcast seem more dynamic," or "I do not like it, but I will accept it if it is best for Cuba."

Certain that the practice is feasible with the philosophy we have outlined, it would not be difficult to finance sports broadcasts in the coming years, as long as good management is exercised for the acquisition of rights and sponsors.

The daring move of attempting this experiment, apart from the financial return it produced for Cuban television, gave viewers at home access to a spectacle in which the Cuban team won the gold medal in games at which dignity and patriotism were on display.

* Garbage, Dirty Streets in Havana City Reported

94CA0055D Havana BOHEMIA in Spanish No 41, 26 Nov 93 p 45

[Article by Juana Carrasco]

[Text] Nauseating odors and swarms of flies surround us in many parts of the capital city. Trash spills out of the few containers available, looking ugly and acting as a vector for "epidemics," as our grandparents used to call insect-borne diseases. This image, which leaves much to be desired, has two causes: inadequate trash collections, and the unfortunate carelessness of those of us who live in the city. We toss things to right and left as we complain about the city's trash collection services, not thinking about the difficulties caused by the fuel shortage and the poor condition of the equipment. This depressing and ugly situation—which is not seen in other Cuban cities and provinces—could be avoided if we paid a little more attention to the beauty of which we boast. I remember the residents of my neighborhood when I was young sweeping their little section of sidewalk every day.

One of my childhood memories is hearing people tell us to "listen for the trash to come," meaning the open carts that at a set time of day collected, block by block, the cans or bins every resident took out at that precise instant so that unpleasant odors would not linger until the air carried them away, and so the flies would fly after the trash collection vehicle. What do we and the People's Councils need to do about this?

* Book Reports Black Market Language, Statistics

94CA0055E Havana BOHEMIA in Spanish No 41, 26 Nov 93 pp 40-42

[Article by Mirta Rodriguez Calderon]

[Text] The people's great concern about the proliferation of theft and black marketeering is reflected in the letters that suddenly piled up on my desk or the telephone calls I received after an article published a few weeks ago.

It seems as if many people had been waiting to see these ideas that have so much to do with our future set down in black and white. Apart from the need to identify these serious problems, everyone asked how to stop a phenomenon that is compromising our society's value system.

Who will our leaders be, and what will they be like in 2010 or 2020? We wonder about this if our children grow up immersed in contradictory situations: when they are told one thing by their families or their school, and then they see shady deals or observe goods coming from the black market, as well as other improper behaviors.

Such situations also have equivalents in language, in which actions have an abstract representation.

For people now in their thirties, the expression being a fighter was related to high ideals. Not so now.

Earning a living used to be applied to examples of self-denial and hard work in extreme poverty: mothers who worked as laundresses, fathers who held multiple jobs, all of which they undertook to support their family. Not anymore.

Making good bread used to mean just what the words said, and was a badge of pride if applied to a creator of bakery delicacies. Now, though, that expression may refer to the productive night of a petty thief who skims off goods from a state store.

Similar semantics have produced at least a hundred linguistic innovations related to that vital area where things that belong to all are enjoyed by a few, and what should be distributed through the commercial network goes out through back doors, to be sold on street corners, in city alleys, and semiconcealed outlets.

These phenomena are certainly hard to root out while we are living in this time of shortages, but it is essential to act from an ideological viewpoint if we want to preserve values that are the mainstay of our nation's ethical heritage.

Hitting Bottom

That is the title of a book my colleague Jorge Rodriguez Hernandez is writing, in which he reveals, denounces, lays bare, and reports on trends in the black market and other distortions of Cuban market relations at the present time. Jorge investigated these problems in response to calls from listeners to his radio program, who contacted him and asked him to look into the numerous irregularities on the fringes of or in the underground economy.

He has compiled over 1,000 files and documents on embezzlement, pilfering, corruption of various sorts, and the outcome of trials in cases that were detected. After five years of systematic work, he has prepared a number of graphics illustrating his investigations, plus pertinent contents of official reports, speeches, and information.

Between 1988 and 1990 my colleague followed 35 court trials. In reviewing his notes, Jorge found that 25 of these economic crimes took place in the capital, and the total damages to the nation came to 19.5 million pesos! In three cases the persons implicated were handling over 1 million pesos in each case, and in another 11 cases, over 100,000 pesos.

On 32 occasions over three persons were involved. In 19 cases the administration was involved, and in another 19, businessmen, officials, accountants, and drivers were involved. Of these 35 crimes, 94 percent happened in the area of material distribution, and within that category, 80 percent involved commerce, restaurants, and services. Fraud was a component of the modus operandi in 91 percent of the cases.

"All this shows," Jorge Rodriguez told me, "the organized character and the degree of complicity of people who, far from exercising positive authority, become lawbreakers. Another symptomatic feature is the occupational status of the criminals, for these are people with jobs, people who work, and in their position or job they become corrupted and corrupt others."

"In black market retailing," he added, "the situation is different: the biggest suppliers are individuals with jobs, and it is usually unemployed people who take the product to its final destination."

Four Years of the Black Market

Jorge has become an expert on the underground economy. One of his most careful investigations always arouses interest. Over a four-year period he followed black market price trends of 19 important consumer items: fats and oils, coffee, fluid, condensed and evaporated milk, beans, cigars, rum and beer, laundry detergents and bath soaps, butter, chicken, beef, and eggs.

A combination of one unit of each of these goods comes to a total, at the official price, of 17.29 [pesos]. Jorge began his calculations in the last quarter of 1990, and they have continued through 1993.

Underground sales have fluctuating prices that rise as demand increases and supply declines, just like in capitalism. So buying a pound, bottle, or part of the 19 products selected for the study would have cost between 129 and 150 pesos in September 1990; between 185 and 226 in October 1991; and in July 1992 these black market prices had risen to between 283 and 398 pesos. Three months later, at the end of October, they were between 347 and 508 pesos.

On 31 January 1993, while the state market allowed Cubans to continue purchasing what was available of these items for the same minimum price they had cost years before, in the underground economy they cost between 392 and 570 pesos; three months later, at the end of April 1993, they cost between 489 and 660 pesos. More recently, at the end of the first two weeks of October, these prices had almost doubled: between 788 and 1,014 pesos in Cuban currency.

If a buyer in this market earned a minimum salary of 100 pesos a month he could not have made these underground purchases unless he also got between 29 and 50 pesos in addition in 1991; between 158 and 233 in April 1992, and between 389 and 560 in April 1993. If he received a maximum salary of 450 pesos, three years ago he could have bought all these items easily, but on 30 April 1993 he would have been 40 pesos short because by that time prices had risen between 28 and 38 times. In October the increase came to between 45 and 59 times.

All these factors will be used in forming individual and collective judgments of what is happening and what to do to diminish the harmful nature of these phenomena. It will at least be useful to speak out openly about this as a reality that must be temporary, and to inculcate in minors a sense of how this double standard of morality destroys the honor of society as a whole.

Making lies and simulation a standard of behavior is highly dangerous. Promoting or participating in embezzlement, bribery, or complicity in thefts from the state, and, therefore, from every other citizen, means a crisis of values that, aside from needing to be put down and punished, must quickly be rooted out from both institutions and individuals. It is vital to stop robbery and corruption and to force them back so they will not destroy the social conscience of our times. In the history of Cuba and in that of other countries, never have petty criminals figured among the legions of those who love and create.

Five Hundred People Surveyed

What do people think, and how do they react, whether or not they are involved in activities that give rise to these situations?

Jorge Rodriguez Hernandez asked 500 workers, 44 percent of whom were under 30, and 54 percent of whom were male. They worked in commerce, restaurants, and services. They were employees in the Matadero and la Planta Habana, in food service, in factories, and light industry shops, in addition to professionals, middle management, and white-collar employees. They were members of the FAR [Revolutionary Armed Forces] and MININT [Ministry of the Interior], plus some retired people, housewives, and people who were unemployed when the survey was conducted in 1991.

What did these 500 people say? Sixty-six percent said they were dissatisfied with the way material and financial resources were being protected; 57 percent said they were also unhappy about the use made of those resources.

Fifty-five percent felt that their standard of living was not the same as that of other members of society; 72 percent added that their needs were not being met as were those of other people. In spiritual and cultural matters, 57 percent said they believed those needs were being fulfilled on an equal basis.

Jorge asked people who work in restaurants, services, and commerce what they thought about the connection between their salary and their contribution to society. Sixty percent thought there was no correlation, and 64 percent thought there was no correlation with the quality and service they provided. And one interesting fact to note: between 61 and 66 percent of those polled in these sectors did believe that social property was well protected and used in terms of normal socialist aspirations.

The details of these evils obviously need much more than one investigative report. These really are issues that cry out for public thought and discussion. Starting with the crisis in authority affecting some people who should be controlling and protecting; and the decline of the community's scorn for a group of behaviors linked to crime and disorder....

For, as my colleague Jorge Rodriguez noted: "Many of the efforts of the state leadership are devoted to plugging up the holes used by people engaging in shady deals. The other thing is that in Cuba there is no exploitation in production. Exploitation is privatized and the traffickers in money and merchandise are the ones engaging in exploitation."

We wondered over and over what can we do about this? What can be done, aside from doing our jobs responsibly, at a time when this entails greater sacrifices?

* Equality, Changes in Pay Scales Viewed

* Economy Requires Changes

94CA0056A Havana TRABAJADORES in Spanish 22 Nov 93 p 2

[Editorial: "Let Us Fight for Equality and Against Egalitarianism"]

[Text] The major achievement of our Socialist revolution is equality of opportunity, rights, and duties for all citizens. This has wiped out a past in which a person came into the world with his destiny already laid out for him. A person was born either as a have or have-not, black or white, man or woman, and from that moment on, each individual was condemned to patterns of inequality from which only a few managed to escape with great difficulty. The revolution, after socializing the basic means of production, established the right to be born in a society that ensures access to education and health care services to all people. These are vital features enabling each individual to have the same opportunities to develop his physical and mental capabilities. Equality is not a gift from heaven, it is not a gift of nature; it is the result of a just distribution of the resources society produces through labor.

Viewed in this way, equality is not sustainable if it does not become a stimulus to increased and improved production. In other words, equality is not only a fine ideal of humanism; it must also be a condition for economic development.

If, today, Cuba can successfully meet the challenge of moving its economy into the changed world we are living in, this will largely be due to the fact that equality of access to education, health care, and work have, during all these years, created invaluable human resources. This is made up not only of a strong work force with a high educational level, but it is also composed of a pool of educated people unmatched in any other country with a similar level of development. One of the most valuable treasures of the revolution is the love for the ideals of justice and equality that the revolution planted in the people, especially in the young people who today constitute the majority of the nation.

But during all these years, we must admit, our national consciousness has not always discerned with proper clarity the limits between equality and egalitarianism.

We have frequently created rights of equality exceeding the nation's real economic possibilities; often practice has converted into egalitarianism an idea originally intended to stimulate production and efficiency based on differences in earnings. This lack of precise and realistic limits between equality and egalitarianism may be considered one of the deep-seated causes of our imperfect application of the socialist principle of distribution to each, in terms of both quantity and quality, according to his contribution. The full application of that principle, the foundation not only of the economy but of all true ethics and justice in socialist society, is a historic goal of the workers and their union movement.

Labor must be the leveling force for measuring each citizen's merit, prestige, and standard of living in a society of workers. In expressing these aspirations, we do not forget that at the present time when, for reasons we all know too well, the nation's economy is experiencing a critical situation, the most just and rational thing to do is to share these difficulties among all the Cuban people, thus in fact reducing the margin of differentiation based on each person's contribution to society.

Controlled, equitable, and rationed distribution, maximum support for employment, and the ample use of price subsidies have helped to save hundreds of thousands of Cubans from distress, bolstering our capacity for resistance and strengthening our national unity.

We Cuban workers fully support this profoundly human and revolutionary policy, but at the same time we must create an awareness that each step toward economic recovery the country takes must be accompanied by a revitalization of the role of salaries and their influence on individual consumption. We support the idea that as internal financial order and equilibrium are restored, we must intensify the use of salary and monetary gradations, as well as other material and moral incentives. This does not contradict, but reaffirms, socialist ideology. We believe payment for work must take into account the importance of the particular economic activity in order to stimulate areas and sectors that contribute most to the nation at a given moment. We believe that salary decisions to be made in the future should be based on the particular features of each geographic area and provide the greatest incentives for the least attractive but most essential jobs for the needs of specific goods or services.

We feel that in the future, decisions on the best rates, forms, and systems of payment should be more flexible and, as a rule, should be made in each entity. This must be accompanied with strict control of the use of the base salary and its relation to the goods or services made in terms of quantity, selection, and quality.

Finally, we maintain that wherever a rigorous managerial climate and labor and technological discipline exist and achieve improved economic results, the workers should be appropriately rewarded. In this way, we will work to establish the principle deeply held by our workers that the inequality to be rejected is not that which differentiates well earned incomes, but equality based on equal treatment for persons of different behavior and ability in their work.

* Material Incentives' Support

94CA0056B Havana TRABAJADORES in Spanish 6 Dec 93 p 2

[Editorial: "Revitalizing Wages and Other Forms of Material Incentives"]

[Text] What motivates a person to work in socialism? What balance should be established between material and moral incentives? Does a material incentive inevitably create uncontrollable trends toward mercantilism and individualism?

This may be the best possible moment to answer these key questions that we Cuban workers have asked ourselves repeatedly throughout our revolutionary history.

Now is the best moment, and, as never before, it is essential to establish the greatest rational and realistic cooperation among the economy, politics, and ideology. This does not mean embracing a vulgar practice that rejects essential features of revolutionary humanism or leads us to confuse what is necessary with what is desirable. It is the best moment because the present situation strengthens our will to correct errors we had found earlier in the organization of labor and salaries and in our interpretation of the conditions influencing labor behavior.

It seems that if one current economic issue needs special analysis because of its enormous, direct, and daily influence on the workers' standard of living and social education, it is the organization of labor and salaries.

So it is not surprising that Cuban society is now focusing on this crucial issue.

It is clearly a vital goal, and not just economic, but ideological as well, to develop formulas and practices seeking the best combination between material and moral incentives.

The unions, representing the workers' vital interests, are absolutely committed to seeking and expanding formulas that by promoting the nation's economic reorganization, will safeguard the ideal of a collectivist and just society with solidarity.

We support without reservation the view that a well-founded material incentive, which is actually a fair share for the performance of a social duty, is in fact a moral incentive of the greatest importance.

The social evaluation shown by providing a material incentive to the individual corresponding to his contribution does not in any way create contradictions detrimental to the worker's morale, just as it cannot be alleged that an exclusively moral incentive can satisfy needs and aspirations of other sorts. There has always been talk of a combination of both types of incentives. Now is the time to interpret fully the meaning of the word "combination" that, in chemistry, for example, means an "intimate union of the molecules of two substances." Just as water is a combination of hydrogen and oxygen, for us the motivation for labor indissolubly combines both material and moral factors. As we have already said, we Cuban workers must promote a process of revitalization of the role of salaries and other forms of material incentives so that we can differentiate to a greater degree the levels of individual consumption in relation to each person's contribution.

It is important to understand the evolving, gradual, and very complex character of this process, so that we do not create false expectations or unjustified demands, and so this will not be identified with former experiments that were rightly criticized. The dynamics of this process will be shaped by the restoration of internal financial order and equilibrium and by the economic recovery steps that Cuba takes in its strategy of reentering the world economy.

Moreover, the policy of renewed emphasis on material incentives would be inappropriate if it were initially extended without discrimination, with the same weight given both to productive sectors and to those that do not directly create material value.

Among productive activities we need to distinguish those which are capable of definitely generating high foreign currency earnings, decreasing convertible currency costs, or which have a special significance in the current strategy of resistance and development. These activities, called multipliers because of their ability to help revitalize the economy in general, are the first to which the motivating force of greater material incentives should come, with the necessary criterion of maximum efficiency and stringent discipline.

It is no waste of time to reiterate that the unions have the duty to demand that in any case, material incentives must also be contingent upon a substantial increase in labor productivity. All that is done to boost productivity and efficiency in these vanguard activities, along with steps for financial improvement, will have repercussions on the dissemination of these incentives toward more and more sectors of the economy and toward nonproductive services.

What is done to revitalize the national economy will in one way or another reach the entire working population, starting by increasing the purchasing power of present salaries.

It can be seen with enormous optimism that wherever the experiment of stimulating more vigorously effort and excellence in work has been tried, the immediate results have more than compensated the investment made.

Still, increases in material incentives should not be conceived solely in terms of raising salaries and giving workers in these centers special access to the consumption of specific goods and services. This simplistic view would lead to failure.

Wherever unquestionable economic gains promoted in large part by greater incentives exist, there are also present satisfaction in work well done, pride in doing one's duty, conscious acceptance of discipline that is desirable and appropriate for each member of the work unit, a precise definition of every person's objectives, functions, and tasks, understanding of the social usefulness of the work done, and the enjoyment of better environmental and working conditions. These experiences show that when the workers are fully and effectively motivated, it contributes to their ideological formation that, as we know, is expressed in the execution of their responsibilities, in their actions.

Beyond words, the essential and most direct way for the worker to take part in the construction of socialist

society is by doing his job. Everything done to promote the value of labor forms a part of the sacred struggle for human dignity.

It may be worthwhile to say that, though we are speaking of the role of material incentives, we do not underestimate the importance of moral incentives. Doing that would once again polarize the focus on this issue, by denying that both form an inseparable whole.

What we want to do is call attention to the necessary view that a material incentive linked organically to decisive political, ideological, and moral aspects, and associated more and more with collective effort, with the cooperation and socialization of labor, far from damaging revolutionary awareness, must and can help to strengthen it.

This is the deeply held conviction of the Cuban union movement.

Haiti

Opening of Parliament Previewed

FL1001215994 Port-au-Prince Signal FM Radio in Creole 1230 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Report by Leontes Dorzilme]

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] In less than four hours, the parliamentarians of the 45th legislature will be returning to the Parliament in order to see if they can untangle the political crisis. Today will mark the opening of the seventh session of the 45th legislature. After more than three months of vacation, extended by the chronic absenteeism of some parliamentarians, there is more suspense and doubt about whether today's session will succeed. The stakes are considerable because the session, which should be held today, 10 January, is aimed at meeting a constitutional requirement, according to the latest statements by National Assembly President Firmin Jean-Louis. However, since September 1991 the unforeseeable has become the rule of the game; everything, including the concerns of the 18 January 1993 parliamentarians, has become a series of situations outside the 1987 Constitution.

During a news conference held on 7 January, Senator Firmin Jean-Louis asked those who were elected on 18 January 1993 not to execute their threats to return to Parliament. He added that the return of the 18 January representatives will have a lot of incalculable consequences on the good functioning of the parliamentary institution.

Contacted by our station, Sen. Dejean Belizaire, leader of the controversial parliamentarians, said that he maintains his stand. He told Signal Radio that all the 18 January parliamentarians would participate in the reopening of the parliamentary work that will take place today. [passage omitted] Sen. Belizaire concluded that the Parliament has never been more abnormal than during the time when the 18 January parliamentarians decided to temporarily stand aloof. [passage omitted]

St. Lucia

New Organization To Manage Banana Industry

FL1001220594 Bridgetown CANA in English 1845 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Report by Guy Ellis]

[Text] Castries, St. Lucia, 10 Jan, CANA—The bankrupt St. Lucia Banana Growers Association (SLBGA) is being replaced by a new organisation to manage the affairs of the banana industry, Prime Minister John Compton has announced here.

Compton, in a nationwide radio and television broadcast at the weekend, said the board was bankrupt, owing "practically every creditor," and was beyond restructuring.

He said a government-appointed committee was currently working on designing a structure for the organisation. The committee's proposal would be presented to the government before month-end, he added.

Further, he said government would also meet with banana farmers as soon as possible, to discuss the proposal and get their views on creating the new organisation.

The banana industry has been facing problems in recent months with low market prices and the declining value of the British pound sterling. This has severely reduced farmers' returns on their production.

These problems acted as a catalyst for a three-day strike by farmers here last October. The farmers were calling for increased prices for their fruit and the disbandment of the slbga board, among others grouses.

After the strike, the board was dissolved by government and replaced by another interim board.

Since then, the SLBGA, has been supporting prices to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars (one EC dollar - 37 cents US) weekly, but SLBGA officials says the support cannot continue indefinitely.

The prime minister also indicated that government had made arrangements with the St Lucia Agriculturists Association, to import fertilisers and other inputs to facilitate the production of bananas here.

Referring to the strike, Compton called for "peace and order" in the industry, saying: "We will not survive if we fight amongst ourselves".

"Our battle is not in the banana fields or on the roads of St Lucia but in the external market and in this battle all our resources must be directed," Compton said.

He called for a concerted effort to revitalise the industry, noting that farmers must become more efficient and increase output, while banana workers needed to give farmers an honest day's work.

And he called on geest industries, which markets the island's fruit overseas, to reduce its costs both here and in the UK to enable farmers to get better returns on their investments.

He noted that since last September, the value of the pound sterling had dropped by about 25 per cent.

In addition, with the opening up of the European market to allow more Latin American bananas onto the market, St Lucia and the other Windward Islands banana-producing countries have lost much of the protection which the British government had given them since they started producing bananas in the mid 1950s.

Compton reported that the SLBGA's total debt was in excess of EC33 million dollars (one EC dollar; 37 cents US) and was spending EC1 million every week more than it received. "Its major creditors are threatening to put it into liquidation. This cannot go on," he said.

If the government failed, he said, in acting to restructure the industry, it would be destroyed and the economy of St Lucia would also collapse. "We must therefore work to create a completely new organisation which is capable of responding to the needs of farmers in the efficient marketing of their fruit," he said.

Trinidad and Tobago

Government 'Will Not be Pressured' by Muslimeen

FL1001164594 Bridgetown CANA in English 1526 GMT 10 Jan 93

[Text] Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, 10 Jan, CANA—Trinidad and Tobago's attorney general Keith Sobion said Sunday government will not be pressured into making a decision on a land dispute with the Jamaat al Muslimeen.

Leader of the Muslimeen, Yasin Abu Bakr, who led the 1990 coup attempt on a former government here, said Friday his organisation had suffered "injustices" at the hands of the state and would not sit idly by should the appeal court not deliver judgement on the land dispute.

In a statement following a strongly-worded warning by the commissioner of police, Sobion said government was committed to the rule of law, and fully respected the role and function of the judiciary.

"It will not be party to any attempt to subvert the rule of law or indeed to manipulate the judiciary. Moreover, the government is confident that the judiciary will not itself rebuff any attempt, whether by the government or otherwise, to subvert or manipulate its processes. Any suggestion to the contrary is patently groundless. The government itself will not be pressured into making any decision relating to this matter," he said.

Sobion noted that there were essentially two issues relating to the lands at Mucurapo Road, in the northern township of St. James. The first is about the status of persons living there, and [the other] is the liability of the state for the demolition of certain buildings shortly after the end of the six-day siege.

Following a press conference called by Bakr, Commissioner of Police Jules Bernard condemned the statements as threats, saying the police were ready to deal with anyone who threatened to disturb the peace.

Former Security Advisor Appointed Ambassador to Korea

FL0701202094 Bridgetown CANA in English 1606 GMT 7 Jan 93

[Text] Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, 7 Jan, CANA—Trinidad and Tobago's former national security minister, John Donaldson, has been appointed non-resident ambassador to Korea.

Foreign Affairs Minister Ralph Maraj said Donaldson will be based in Port of Spain, as economic constraints have forced government to increase the number of non-resident ambassadors where diplomatic postings in faraway countries were concerned.

"I'm optimistic that being able to be in closer contact with the cabinet and the government, a non-resident ambassador will be better positioned to deepen relations ... And will prove more productive than what existed before," he said. The minister also said that a delegation of Korean businessmen was expected in Trinidad for a trade fair in April.

Salinas Meets Salvadoran, Honduran Presidents

PA0801031894 Mexico City Radio Mil Network in Spanish 2330 GMT 7 Jan 94

[Report by Ricardo Trejos from "The City" newscast]

[Text] President Carlos Salinas de Gortari met a few minutes ago with Salvadoran President Alfredo Cristiani and Honduran President Rafael Leonardo Callejas. This meeting had been agreed upon in early December 1993.

The meeting, which lasted a couple of hours, was held at the official residence of Los Pinos in an atmosphere of cordiality and frankness. They reviewed the regional situation, bilateral relations, the outlook for the free trade agreement, and various topics of interest to the three countries, as is explained in a communique issued a few minutes ago by the Presidency General Media Directorate. The governments expressed their desire to cooperate and to provide mutual support to achieve greater development in the region.

The Salvadoran and Honduran presidents will return to their countries today. The communique does not specify whether the presidents discussed the topic of Chiapas.

President Salinas Announces Cabinet Changes

PA1001221394 Mexico City XEW Television Network in Spanish 2058 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Statement by President Carlos Salinas de Gortari at the Los Pinos Presidential Residence on 10 January—recorded]

[Text] The Government of the Republic has the essential duty of ensuring the validity of the state of law and the safety of the citizens. Therefore, it is willing to undertake actions to prevent the dynamics of the serious events that have taken place in Chiapas State from leading to more confrontations. This requires political decisions in favor of the nation, and which are a recognition of what did not work properly.

In order to guarantee full adherence to the Constitution and the law in the public decisions demanded under the circumstances, and in order to open efficacious channels for reconciliation and justice in Chiapas State, based on Article 82 of the Constitution, we have agreed to:

1. Appoint Dr. Jorge Carpizo as government secretary. His mission will be to bear the responsibility of that office to guarantee that all the decisions necessary to restore the tranquility in Chiapas State as soon as possible, and maintain it in the rest of the country, will be in strict accordance with the law; and also to guarantee that the 1994 federal elections will be carried out in strict accordance with our Constitution and the new standing legislation.

This morning I accepted the resignation of Jose Patrocinio Gonzalez Blanco-Garrido.

2. In light of the need to create a framework, an agenda, and procedures for reconciliation of the conflict in Chiapas State, while meeting with Mr. Manuel Camacho Solis, we discussed his feelings about fulfilling this task. He said that as it is such an important cause for the nation, his work would require very broad flexibility for action in society and permanent access to the highest level in the government.

As it is in fact a totally new topic, he will be the commissioner for peace and reconciliation in Chiapas. He will have the support of, and permanent access to the president of the Republic.

On his part, he will seek to open spaces for society to contribute to the reconciliation in Chiapas State, aside from the general context. [sentence as heard]

Mr. Manuel Camacho, asked me to allow him to carry out that duty without a salary and without creating any new government organization.

3. Mr. Manuel Tello Macias, will be the foreign relations secretary. Ambassador Tello Macias, a career diplomat, will guide the foreign policy with firmness and prudence, based on historic principles that shall always care for the national sovereignty.

4. Mr. Diego Valadez will be the attorney general of the Republic. Mr. Valadez, a well-known attorney, was until today the attorney general of the Federal District. He has broad experience in government duties and administration of justice. His instructions are to fulfill and enforce the Constitution and the laws, while maintaining the guidelines of conduct and work that have been characteristic of this institution.

Mr. Rene Gonzalez de la Vega, will be the acting attorney general of the Federal District.

I have sworn in all these public servants and they will immediately assume their new duties.

With these guidelines and political decisions, the government of the Republic will strengthen the law and respect for human rights, and open channels for conciliation without ceasing, at any moment, to guarantee safety in Chiapas State.

The Mexican Army, with loyalty and patriotism spawned from its historic roots and its popular origin, in fulfilling its constitutional responsibility and in accordance with the policy of the government of the Republic, will continue to guarantee the safety of the citizens in Chiapas; and, together with the proper authorities, will contribute to keeping individuals or groups from seeking to disrupt, through violence, the tranquility of the families and the harmony of the country.

Thank you very much.

Attorney General's Office Announces New Appointments

PA1001191994 Mexico City XEW Television Network in Spanish 0430 GMT 7 Jan 94

[From the "24 Hours" newscast]

[Text] There have been changes at the Attorney General's Office. Gustavo Hirales Moranes is the new director of the Illicit Crops Erradication Agency and Carlos Santibanez Ramos is director of the Federal Judicial Police's Narcotics Department.

Colosio Continues Campaign, Meets With Railroad Union

PA1001164394 Mexico City XEW Television Network in Spanish 1300 GMT 7 Jan 94

[From the "Upon Awakening" newscast]

[Text] Luis Donaldo Colosio, the PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party] presidential candidate, is continuing his political campaign. On 6 January he met with leaders from the Union of Railroad Workers of the Republic of Mexico [STFRM] and told them that economic competitiveness, improved trade procedures, and increasingly efficient services would be inconceivable without the railroad industry. He emphasized that the railroad sector must play a very important role in turn-of-the-century Mexico. Colosio pledged to promote a new phase of regional development in Mexico in which the railroad will be fundamental.

The presidential candidate asserted that Mexico will become stronger as its regions become more closely integrated, thereby increasing and improving trade. Colosio described the railroad workers as heirs of the tradition, effort, and tenacity to promote Mexico's growth.

The STFRM's national leader Antonio Castellanos Tovar spoke on the union's behalf.

Chiapas Crisis

Politicians Question Handling of Uprising

PA0801044494 Mexico City Radio ACIR Network in Spanish 1900 GMT 7 Jan 94

[Report by Roxie Wasking Vasquez from the "Vector 21" newscast; passages within quotation marks recorded]

[Text] In officially opening the elections campaign for the 21 August 1994 elections, Government Secretary Patrocinio Gonzalez Garrido, acting as director of the General Council of the Federal Electoral Institute [IFE], has called for respect for the law.

Without mentioning the Chiapas conflict, he issued his first statement since the beginning of the armed struggle in that state. He said that violence is the negation of politics and represents backwardness, disorder, anarchy, and the destruction of democracy.

The government secretary appeared gaunt, nervous, and worried. He said only the law can guarantee legal security and democratic life. He noted that, within a state of law, it is always possible to punish criminals. Gonzalez also insisted that violence does not permit the reaching of agreements. Here is what he said:

[Gonzalez] "Society, the political parties, and the government reject violence as a means of producing political and social change. As the president has said, there is nothing that can inhibit Mexicans' ability to reach agreements and to talk among themselves. The federal government has reiterated its commitment to safeguarding and strengthening a state of law with the security and peace demanded by development, as well as with dialogue and agreements as means for securing fundamental cooperation. All of this requires laws and compliance with the law."

After delivering this message, the meeting turned into a debate on the situation in Chiapas. The political parties represented at the IFE General Council have rejected violence, but there is criticism about the methods the Mexican Army and the federal government have used to put down the uprising.

A calm and articulate Porfirio Munoz Ledo [leader of the Party of the Democratic Revolution—PRD] engaged the attention of his listeners by charging that the government controls the public forces and that the Indians have become cannon fodder. Munoz Ledo, speaking as the PRD representative, said the inefficient and segregationist policies of the regime should be questioned. He denied that the political forces have a common position on the Chiapas events. We, he said, demand moderation, legality, dialogue, timely information, and effective support and help for the people. We also demand respect for human rights and basic solutions, as well as an end to the impunity of government officials and political agents. Here is what Porfirio Munoz Ledo said:

[Munoz] "The executive branch has the constitutional obligation to determine when, how soon, and how officials under its jurisdiction should be changed. Our responsibility is to continue struggling for the renewal and purge of the electoral authorities at all levels."

Alberto Carrillo Armenta, representative of the Cardenist Front for National Reconstruction Party, also called for a nonmilitary solution in Chiapas. He said this year's elections process cannot be initiated if there is a state of emergency. He demanded security measures for candidates who, like the Cardenist Front's candidate—Rafael Aguilar—will be carrying out a political campaign in that state of the Republic.

The Popular Socialist Party, represented by Jesus Carlos Hernandez, called for common sense in the debates on,

and in the solution of, the Chiapas conflict. He rejected foreign meddling in the region.

The National Action Party also participated in the debate. Juan de Dios Castro spoke in a very emotional tone. He tried to stir the political awareness of the Institutional Revolutionary Party [PRI], the federal government, and all Mexicans. He said the conflict in Chiapas could extend to other regions of the federation because there is poverty in all of them. He explained that the individual guarantees of the Mexican people cannot be violated because of what is happening in Chiapas.

He recalled, quoting a South American leader, that changes will take place with or without politicians—they just come. Here is what Juan de Dios Castro said:

[Castro] "Changes will take place with or without us. If they take place without us, this will sadden me. The people are making demands. They are shouting demands that we make structural changes. They are also demanding respect for the Constitution."

The PRI had three of its militants at the meeting. Two of them are official IFE representatives—Santiago Nate and Amador Rodriguez Lozano—and the third one, Miguel Gonzalez Avelar, is an adviser to the Chamber of Deputies. The PRI representatives said their party is not evading a debate, but they asked that the issue be discussed at a forum other than IFE.

Amador Rodriguez Lozano said democracy is not a birthright of political parties but, rather, of society. He said democracy does not equate with irreconcilable division, and he added that no attention should be paid to apocalyptic visions. He said there are other problems that require the attention of IFE's General Council. Here is Amador Rodriguez Lozano:

[Rodriguez] "The position we must adopt at this first meeting should not be one of searching for a leading role in the discussion of this problem. We should center our attention on the many difficult matters we have ahead of us—matters that we will have to discuss repeatedly, passionately, and often."

Miguel Gonzalez Avelar said there should be no confusion concerning the Mexican Army's involvement. He said that communities have the right to demand, as in the case of Chiapas, the presence of national forces. He said it would not be right for members of the federation not to expect to demand and receive help from the forces of the federation.

Gonzalez added that our duty is not to dull our awareness. He recalled that in Chiapas there are rebel minorities, just as those who killed [Mexican Independence hero Miguel] Hidalgo were also in the minority, as were those who brought a foreign prince to Mexico and those who killed [Mexican patriot Francisco] Madero. Here is what Gonzalez said:

[Gonzalez] "Today there is this faceless violence from a well- organized group that unfortunately and tragically includes young people aremed with wooden rifles who remind us of the Cristera War [between government forces and Catholic militants] when young people charged federal soldiers to silence their rifle barrels with little wax balls, believing this could be done because the little wax balls had been previously blessed by their pastors.

"In any event, these groups are proposing substituting the party system for the unalterable will of rifles."

The first regular IFE session is continuing. It has officially opened the 21 August elections process to renew the Senate, the Chamber of Deputies, the Presidency, and the House of Representatives. The session continues. The members will be discussing other issues. Discussions on the Chiapas events concluded at 1200.

Document Profiles Zapatist National Liberation Army

PA0801143394 Mexico City XEW Television Network in Spanish 0435 GMT 8 Jan 94

[From the "24 Hours" newscast]

[Text] Socorro Diaz, deputy secretary for civilian protection at the Government Secretariat, read today a 28-page document with important information on the armed groups that have provoked violence in Chiapas State. She said the so-called Zapatist National Liberation Army [EZLN] is an extremist organization.

[Begin Diaz recording, in progress] ...violent, professional, and well trained. Its profile is highly ideological and uses a language that is characteristic of extremist guidelines. [end recorded]

The armed group includes the participation of ideologists and clergy; there are medics and transmission technicians, and it is comprised of Mexicans and foreigners. Its operation strategy for 1993 consisted of advocating the invasion of lands and provoking an overall violence. In certain cases it kidnaps children to force their parents to join the armed group.

Referring to the group's weapons, Diaz said it has machine guns, shotguns, revolvers, and sophisticated weapons that are suited for guerrilla warfare. The weapons were manufactured mainly in the United States, Russia, and the UK.

[Begin Diaz recording] The so-called EZLN appeared in 1993 in five municipalities of Chiapas State—Ocosingo, Las Margaritas, Comitan, Altamirano, and Chanal. It has an organized network of activists cells that are in permanent contact with civilian band radios. It has 15 training centers in various municipalities; six of them are located in Las Margaritas, five in Ocosingo, two in Sabanillas, one in Altamirano, and one in Chanal. [end recording]

The report read by Mrs. Socorro Diaz is based on information that was provided by the National Defense

Secretariat and the Attorney General's Office. She said the group has martial arts instructors and health promoters. Each squad of activists is comprised of one sergeant, one corporal, one radio operator, one health promoter, and 20 activists. The group has 172 civilian band radio stations in its camps, and authorities have found propaganda of the Revolutionary Workers Clandestine People's Union Party [Procup], which the group supports by distributing its publications.

The aggressor group is comprised of and supported by various extremist organizations. They have safe houses and assembly centers where they show political-revolutionary movies to the people. Diaz said many of its leaders have already been identified.

Officials Confirm Low Surveillance at Border

PA0901183594 Mexico City XEW Television Network in Spanish 1600 GMT 9 Jan 94

[Report by Jose Eduardo Campos from Tapachula, Chiapas State; from the "This Sunday" program—live]

[Text] We are in the city of Tapachulas, Chiapas State, to where we have just returned following an extensive visit along the border area with Guatemala, the border that divides these two countries. We were in Ciudad de Hidalgo, the last town in Chiapas, and crossed into Tecun Uman, the first town in Guatemala. During our visit, the Televisa news team assigned to this area was able to learn that people have no problem in crossing illegally into Mexico from Guatemala. It is believed that approximately 200 people can enter Mexico every day just through Ciudad de Hidalgo en route to the center of the country or the interior of Chiapas. Different immigration officials have confirmed this information. They have said surveillance in the area between Guatemala and Mexico is low, meaning that a large number of people is easily entering Chiapas, coming from Central America or even South America.

We also visited the highways around the border area, linking Tapachulas. We were able to see that there is little surveillance, but in the major areas of Tapachula—such as the airport, a Mexican Petroleum station, and a large park or zoo—the Mexican Army has strong security. Also participating in that operation are members of the state and municipal police and the Attorney General's Office. In addition to soldiers and Federal Judicial Police, state, and municipal police agents, Federal Highway Police agents are deployed at the airport; they are not letting cars go near the airport's gate. One has to walk 150 to 200 meters from where cars are parked to be able to enter the airport.

[Unidentified anchorman] Going back to your visit along the border, did you see Guatemalan soldiers on the Guatemalan side?

[Campos] The military presence on the Guatemala side is even smaller than on the Mexican side. On the Mexican side, we saw three immigration officials on the ground; two others are conducting an inspection in a patrol car. On the Guatemalan side, we only saw two people manning this border area.

We specifically asked Mr. Freddy Chicago, who is on the Mexican side, if the flow of people entering Mexico or Chiapas, more precisely, has gone up. He replied that it has risen considerably. On the Suchiate River side, which is where people cross illegally, the number has also risen considerably. Crossing the Suchiate River right now.... [pauses] Because the river between Ciudad de Hidalgo and Tecun Uman is merely 50 centimeters deep, many people walk across, and many others use rafts consisting of boards tied to inner tubes. They make it across the border without problems.

Paper Claims Former FSLN Guerrilla Heads EZLN

PA1001204294 Managua LA PRENSA in Spanish 9 Jan 94 pp 1, 12

[Report by Abelardo Sanchez]

[Text] Ocotal—With regard to the mysterious identity of Commander "Marcos," leader of the Mexican Zapatista guerrilla group, the newspaper LA PRENSA offers its readers a photograph of Marcos Rojas, an internationalist guerrilla who joined the armed struggle of the FSLN [Sandinist national Liberation Front] during the liberation war.

During the 1980's, Rojas was a member of the Sandinist People's Army staff in Ocotal. He went by two names "The Compa Marcos" and "The Mexican." Also, he had a daughter with Luisa Amelia Sierra, an Ocotal resident who lived in the "Lacayo Farfan" neighborhood.

Sierra, who was attending Managua's National Autonomous University of Nicaragua at the time, was killed in a traffic accident between Sebaco and "San Benito." After Sierra died, Marcos returned to Mexico, taking his daughter Araceli with him. Prior to leaving, he told his FSLN "comrades" that if they wanted to contact him, to call 757-4723 in Mexico City.

Rojas used to hang around the church entrance in Ocotal where he would meet with certain FSLN sympathizers to teach them the "Workers to Power" FSLN song and other FSLN slogans that were in fashion back then.

Some people who looked at the photograph of the "Zapatista" guerrilla published by LA PRENSA on Thursday, 6 January, estimate his age to be 40 years old, which is the same age as the Mexican Marcos Rojas.

Rojas left Nicaragua in 1985, six years after the triumph of the revolution. Before he left Ocotal he said: "I am leaving, but I am taking all of Sandinist Nicaragua in my heart. But like the revolutionary that I am, I am leaving because I am needed in my homeland (Mexico)."

It was difficult for LA PRENSA to gather all the information on Rojas. His photograph was obtained from a

file handled by FSLN members. These were the steps taken to establish the identity of the mysterious "Marcos," chief of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN).

Is this only a coincidence? Two different people with the same name, or is Marcos Rojas the man who heads the guerrilla movement of the so-called Zapatistas?

PGR Denies Giving Daily List of Rebel Leaders

PA1001162594 Mexico City Canal 13 Television Azteca Network in Spanish 0400 GMT 10 Jan 94

[From the "TV-13 Sunday" newscast]

[Text] The daily EXCELSIOR published today a report on the alleged leaders of the armed groups in Chiapas. The report contains a list attributed to the Attorney General's Office [PGR] that includes priests, legislators, teachers, and PRD [Party of the Democratic Revolution] figures are among the rebel leaders.

Attorney General Jorge Carpizo today sent a letter to EXCELSIOR editor Regino Diaz Redondo stating that the PGR has not provided that information. It is obvious, Carpizo indicated in his letter, that the document does exist, but it has not come from the PGR. The official added that as far as he an the PGR are concerned, having a series of rumors and false statements attributed to them constitutes the most serious blow that could be dealt. Carpizo said the rumors are intended to destroy what has been built through much toil and that they harm the foundation for dispensing justice.

Pursuit of Rebels Continues in Altos de Chiapas

PA1001145294 Mexico City Canal 13 Television Azteca Network in Spanish 1300 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Report by Javier de la Torre; from the "Good Morning From Mexico" newscast]

[Excerpt] The Army is continuing to pursue the rebels in Altos de Chiapas. The clashes have not stopped, especially near San Cristobal de las Casas. The first signs of an eventual dialogue with the armed groups have emerged.

The clashes continued between the Army and the rebels in Los Altos de Chiapas for the eighth consecutive day. The Army has repelled a rebel attack against the Rancho Nuevo Military Barracks near San Cristobal de las Casas. The roads to the areas of conflict remain closed.

During the pursuit operations, authorities found a Pemex [Mexican Petroleum] vehicle from which the rebels stole 1.5 tons of dynamite 31 December. The truck was found in Guadalupe Tepeyac, a town thought to be the rebels' stronghold, where it has been confirmed they are still holding captive the former Chiapas State governor, Absalon Castellanos, and approximately 100 social security employees of the town. Thousands of Indians and peasants are fleeing from the areas of conflict to seek refuge in San Cristobal de las Casas, a city being reinforced by the Army. [passage omitted]

Rights Activists Turned Back Near San Cristobal

PA1001150594 Mexico City Canal 13 Television Azteca Network in Spanish 1300 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Report by Samuel Prieto Rodriguez from Chiapas Department; from the "Good Morning From Mexico" newscast]

[Text] The National Network of Civilian Human Rights Organizations again tried on Sunday to pass a military roadblock outside of San Cristobal de las Casas in an effort to go to Ocosingo and Altamirado. On Saturday, the organization had sent a letter to National Defense Secretary General Antonio Riviello Bazan and 31st Military Garrison Commander Gaston Melchaca, informing them of the intention to make the visit based on Articles 6 and 11 of the Constitution.

[Begin recording of human rights leader Martin Faz, indentified by caption] If a legitimate and well-grounded impediment exists which would keep us from carrying out this objective, please, let us know as soon as possible at the Plaza Domingo Hotel, telephone 8-19-27. The above statement is based on Article 8 of the Constitution. [end recording]

About 16 of the organization's representatives, including five from the New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights and other U.S. groups, as well as an Indian representative from that country, left in two station wagons and headed toward the military roadblock located on the road to Rancho Nuevo, followed by a motorcade of 50 cars of reporters. At the roadblock, they were told to return to San Cristobal to meet with CNDH [National Human Rights Committee] Chairman Jorge Madrazo. The press was advised to meet with Eloy Cantu Segovia, a senior official of the Government Secretariat. These officials would inform them of those places to which they are allowed access.

In view of this situation, and because they were unable to locate Madrazo, the nongovernment groups left in the afternoon toward the roadblock on the Tenejapa road. On the way there, one of the vehicles ran over an Indian, but fortunately without major consequences.

There are combat vehicles in midtown San San Cristobal de las Casas, which are reinforcing military surveillance. Cantu Segovia and Madrazo issued no statement on Sunday afternoon. It is worth mentioning that the area's military roadblocks do not merely consist of tangible objects.

Attorney General's Office Remands 8 Rebels

PA1001155994 Mexico City Canal 13 Television Azteca Network in Spanish 1300 GMT 10 Jan 94

[From the "Good Morning From Mexico" newscast]

[Text] The Attorney General's Office has taken legal action against eight rebels arrested in Chiapas. The eight rebels have said they were led by Commander Marcos, a Guatemalan, and (Jesus Meza Yaladaqui), also a Guatemalan. The arrested were remanded under the charges of homicide, infliction of injuries, criminal association, and the use of regulation weapons exclusive to the Army.

The First District judge in Tuxtla Gutierrez has remanded another group of 18 rebels.

Human Rights President Reports to Salinas

PA1001143594 Mexico City Canal 13 Television Azteca Network in Spanish 1300 GMT 10 Jan 94

[From the "Good Morning From Mexico" newscast]

[Text] Jorge Madrazo Cuellar, president of the National Human Rights Commission, has met with President Carlos Salinas de Gortari to report on his organization's activities in Chiapas. In his report, Madrazo Cuellar highlighted the efforts made since 1 January to help the civilians in the conflict area. He said that the National Human Rights Commission has established offices in Tuxtla Gutierrez and San Cristobal de las Casas and that investigators, criminologists, forensic physicians, and social affairs personnel have been sent to investigate all reports on alleged human rights violations.

Candidates Review Chiapas Events

PA1001151694 Mexico City Canal 13 Television Azteca Network in Spanish 1300 GMT 10 Jan 94

[From the "Good Morning From Mexico" newscast]

[Text] PAN [National Action Party] presidential candidate Diego Fernandez de Cevallos has begun his political campaign in the city of Queretaro. Speaking to some 2,000 supporters, Fernandez de Cevallos referred to events in Chiapas by saying that bullets have to be used before people can understand that true social peace can only be achieved through justice.

Meanwhile, PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party] presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio today will begin his political campaign in Huejutla, Hidalgo State. Colosio also will visit Ciudad Valle, San Luis Potosi, Queretaro, Pachuca, Hidalgo, and Ecatepec in Mexico State before returning to Mexico City on 14 January.

PRD [Party of the Democratic Revolution] presidential candidate Cuauhtemoc Cardenas decided to postpone this week's scheduled trip to Sinaloa and Jalisco to remain in Mexico City and monitor developments in Chiapas. Cardenas will visit Colima State on 15 and 16 January.

Security Measures Cited in State

PA1001141794 Mexico City XEW Television Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 10 Jan 94

[From the ECO news service]

[Text] The government of Mexico State issued a press communique yesterday reiterating its decision to apply the necessary measures to preserve state residents' integrity and security. It will also take the necessary surveillance measures to protect utility installations.

Meanwhile, the Federal District Attorney General's Office has reported that dynamite was used in the car bomb explosion in Mexico City Plaza Universidad Shopping Center on early Saturday morning [8 January]. Specialized personnel collected samples at the explosion site that consisted of metal fragments and synthetic materials of the vehicle used in the explosion. The study led authorities to rule out the possibility that a device made up of powder only was used; residues of this material were not found. Authorities also ruled out the use of a material called anfo, which is composed of ammonium nitrate and fuel oil, because residues of this product were not found either.

Mexico City Mayor Manuel Aguilera Gomez spoke this Sunday about security in Mexico City. Authorities from the capital met on Sunday with residents of the capital's 16 political districts to talk about security matters in Mexico City. In an auditorium in Benito Juarez District, Mayor Manuel Aguilera Gomez spoke to Mexico City residents and said surveillance operations in public buildings, schools, and other areas have been intensified by the different police corps.

[Begin Aguilera recording] The city is in peace. The city is continuing to conduct normal activity. [end recording]

Aguilera Gomez said he will keep citizens permanently informed about the events that are taking place in the capital. Diego Balades, federal district attorney general, also spoke during the event.

[Begin Balades recording] The mayor has said there is no cause for alarm, and this is so. There is no reason to be alarmed. We must simply remain in a state of alert. We are in a state of alert, both society and authorities. The authorities' cooperation is permanent and constant in Mexico City, as well as in the entire country. [end recording]

Representatives of the various Mexico City districts also participated in the meeting. Meanwhile, Mr. Sergio Fuentes, a resident of Istapalapa, said the following:

[Begin Fuentes recording] We want to make it clear that we, Mexicans, are used to living in peace. All of our differences have always been resolved within the framework of the law. [end recording]

Those also present were the 16 district representatives and Juan Jose Osorio, leader of the Assembly of Representatives, Rene Monterrubio, secretary general of the Traffic Department, and Jose Monroy, president of the Mexico City Advisory Council.

Poverty in Chiapas Seen as Major Source of Strife

PA1001201794 Mexico City Canal 13 Television Azteca Network in Spanish 1300 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Report by Juan Manuel Pereyra and Marisa Lopez from the "Good Morning From Mexico" newscast]

[Excerpts] [Pereyra] Mexico's 32 departments register different poverty levels. Experts feel that poverty is ancestral since its origins date back 500 years. Oaxaca State has a poverty level of 11 percent and is the poorest state in the country. Mexico City, with a poverty level of 0.1 percent, is the least impoverished. Chiapas State's 111 municipalities are poor. It is the second most impoverished state in the country. The poverty there, as anywhere else, generates ignorance. There is poverty, not misery, in Chiapas. Poverty and the ignorance of those suffering from its consequences have become a breeding ground for professional terrorists who have pit the people of Chiapas—luckily a minority of them—against their institutions. Rural areas have the highest poverty levels in this state. Monoculture is the chief occupation of the people here. [passage omitted] It is in these areas where the level of production and service infrastructure is very low. About 60 percent of Chiapas residents live in rural areas. Moreover, 99 percent of the state's 16,400 towns are rural. Poverty in Chiapas has many indicators. For instance, 60 percent of the economically active population earns minimum wages. Indians make up one-fifth of the population. Also, 19 percent of the people have no income. The illiteracy rate is 30 percent. There are no roads. [passage omitted]

[Lopez] Chiapas has a population of approximately 3.6 million. The current strife zone is located in six of its 111 municipalities. Four of these municipalities have a population of a little more than 360,000 persons, or 11.8 percent of the population. The majority of the people in Ocosingo, San Cristobal de las Casas, Las Margaritas, and Comitan de Dominguez, the site of last week's clashes, work the land. That is where one cause of the conflict lies. With almost nonexistent land reform following the victory of the revolution and inadequate land distribution during the Cardenas eras, pressure on the land has displaced a large number of people, mostly Indians. [passage omitted]

Army Preparing Large Offensive Against Rebels

PA1001205994 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1646 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Text] San Cristobal de las Casas (Mexico), 10 Jan (EFE)—The Mexican Armed Forces are preparing a large offensive against the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) in Chiapas State and have moved approximately 15,000 soldiers, 40 tanks, planes, helicopters, and paratroopers to that southern area. The "final offensive" to be launched by the military this week will have the town of Guadalupe Tepeyac—the only one still under rebel control—as its main objective, the Mexican media asserted today, Monday.

Several Social Security employees have indicated that approximately 200 rebels are holding approximately 100 Guadalupe Tepeyac Hospital physicians and nurses hostage at those installations. The hospital is 800 meters from the Guatemalan border.

Unofficial reports also indicate that former Chiapas Governor General Absalon Castellanos could also be held in Guadalupe Tepeyac. Castellanos was kidnapped by the rebels a day after the conflict began, and the rebels announced that they intended to subject him to a summary trial.

None of the reporters assigned to the area or the residents of the cities negatively affected by the conflict have been able to confirm reports on the Armed Forces offensive because the roads that lead to the area have been closed by the Mexican Army.

There continues to be an important movement of troops at the colonial city of San Cristobal de las Casas, the entrances to which are guarded by tanks, and according to the media, large numbers of soldiers are constantly arriving. Military checkpoints in the Chiapas jungle and mountain regions have also been reinforced. Not even the civilians who want to take potable water, medicine, and food to relatives trapped in the conflict area are allowed to pass. Local radio stations are constantly broadcasting messages requesting help for the besieged residents or reports that they are well so relatives in other regions can be at ease.

On 1 January the EZLN took up arms against the Mexican Government, declared war on the Armed Forces, and seized several communities. Since then the confrontations have not stopped, and according to unofficial reports, at least 200 are dead and 1,000 injured.

In its counteroffensive, the Mexican Army managed to push the rebels to the mountainous area surrounding San Cristobal de las Casas and is currently searching for the guerrilla's general headquarters, which is hidden in Lacandona jungle.

The last reported clash took place at the 31st Military Zone garrison in Rancho Nuevo, 10 km from Ocosingo, yesterday, Sunday. The National Defense Secretariat has not reported casualties on either side.

On that same day the Army arrested Mexican priest Isidro Guillermo Badillo Brana at the border between Chiapas and Tabasco States. He is charged with commanding a group of rebels and was transferred to the military installations in San Cristobal de las Casas. The local church has demanded the parish priest's immediate

dismissal and announced that if it is not done the church will ask for intervention by the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH.)

According to the National Defense Secretariat, the 106 rebels who have been arrested revealed important information regarding the EZLN's organization, its ties with Central American rebel groups, and the orientation of its leaders. The Attorney General's Office reported in a communique that according to the rebels' testimony, at least two of the EZLN leaders are Guatemalans— Commanders Marcos and Jesus—and it is they who headed the takeover of San Cristobal de las Casas.

The Judicial Police and the Army have begun to search for both leaders, who apparently participated in the Rancho Nuevo clash at the beginning of the hostilities when five soldiers were killed.

Mayor's Office Increases Security

PA1001200294 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1820 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Text] Mexico City, 10 Jan (EFE)—The Mexico City Mayor's Office announced today, Monday, the adoption of measures to prevent members or supporters of the Zapatist National Liberation Army (EZLN) from entering the metropolis.

The measures include an exhaustive review of the baggage of all the travelers entering the city by land or air. The municipality will also establish an emergency telephone service to protect citizens in case of attacks.

"It is not a matter of militarizing the metropolis or frightening the citizens. These are only measures to prevent attacks such as those that have taken place in neighboring cities," Regent (Mayor) Manuel Aguilera Gomez stated.

He warned that officials who check baggage will not be allowed to violate the people's right to free movement "because we cannot allow individual guarantees to be trampled upon due to a transitory situation."

In addition, police surveillance will be reinforced at schools, places of public assembly and recreation, public transportation centers, sewage an potable water treatment plants, and electricity plants

The mayor commented that approximately 20 bomb threats had been received at several government offices, private firms, and newspaper offices between Friday and Saturday, all of which turned out to be false alarms.

EL NACIONAL has reported that the Judicial Police took 90 Chiapas residents into custody for questioning. The people arrived in Mexico City on Sunday, supposedly under contract by a firm. The police released them 16 hours later.

EZLN Releases 80 Social Security Workers

PA1001210294 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1828 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Text] Comitan, Mexico, 10 Jan (EFE)—The Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) today released approximately 80 social security workers it had held hostage in Guadalupe Tepeyac, which is about 800 meters from the Guatemalan border.

The workers, who walked 40 km to the community of Pimienta, said there could be about 100 EZLN members in Guadalupe Tepeyac and that they had reports that former Chiapas Governor Absalon Castellanos Dominguez might be in that town. Castellanos, who was Chiapas governor from 1982 to 1988, was kidnapped on 2 January by EZLN members and his whereabouts remain unknown.

Rejects Government Dialogue Conditions

PA1101024094 Paris AFP in Spanish 0201 GMT 11 Jan 94

[Report by special envoy Antonio Ortega]

[Text] San Cristobal de las Casas, Mexico, 10 Jan (AFP)—The guerrilla members of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) consider unacceptable the Mexican Government's conditions for a consultation, according to a communique dated 6 January and divulged on Monday in San Cristobal de las Casas.

"The 'consultation' conditions that the government is trying to impose on us are unacceptable (....) We will not put down our weapons until our demands are accepted," it is stated in the EZLN communique, written in four pages and sent to TIEMPO newspaper in San Cristobal, Chiapas State.

The guerrilla members demand "recognition of the EZLN as a belligerent force," a "cease-fire by both parties throughout the territory involved in the conflict," and the "withdrawal of federal troops from all the communities, with full respect for human rights." A communique from the Clandestine Indian Revolutionary Committee-General Command of the EZLN also demands an end to the "indiscriminate bombardment of rural towns."

"Our troops pledge to respect those conditions (cease-fire and others) if the federal government does likewise. Otherwise, our troops will continue to advance toward the country's capital," the EZLN emphasizes. The text also states: "Since 1 January this year our Zapatista troops began a series of political-military actions the goal of which is to let the people of Mexico and the rest of the world know under what conditions millions of Mexicans, particularly we the Indians, live and die." "The actions we started prove our decision to fight for our most basic rights through the only means left by the government authorities," the text adds.

The rebels issued an appeal "to the U.S. Government and peoples. They ask the U.S. people to initiate actions of solidarity and support for our fellow citizens and ask the U.S. Government to suspend all economic and military assistance to the Mexican Federal Government, which is a dictatorial government that does not respect human rights, and because such aid will be used to massacre the peoples of Mexico."

The guerrillas state that "our EZLN does not have in its ranks, its organization, or its leadership, any foreigner, nor has it ever received any support or advice from revolutionary movements of other countries or foreign governments." "The report that there are Guatemalans trained in the neighboring country in our ranks are stories invented by the federal government to undermine our cause," the communique states.

The EZLN also rejected any links with the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity, the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front of El Salvador, or the church. "The EZLN commanders and troops are mostly Chiapas Indians. That is because we, the Indians, represent the most humiliated and dispossessed sector of Mexico," the communique says. It adds that the EZLN also includes Mexicans of other social levels and different states of our country."

Commander "Marcos" who signed the communique asked the newspaper TIEMPO to release the document to national and international media.

El Salvador

President Cristiani Gives Message to Nation

PA1001223794 San Salvador Radio and Television Networks in Spanish 0200 GMT 10 Jan 94

["Message" to the nation by Salvadoran President Alfredo Cristiani; place not given; from a "Special Program" presented by the National Communications Secretariat—live]

[Text] Beloved fellow Salvadorans, now that we have begun a new year I would like to take advantage of this occasion to wish you all the best in 1994 on behalf of Margarita, our children, and myself. May this year bring you well-being and prosperity.

At year's end each of us has an opportunity to think, to be with our families, and to examine our past, present, and future. With the internal peace fostered by the Christmas season, which allows us to reflect—which I am certain we all did—I thought of my almost five years in office and examined where I came from, where I am, and where I am headed.

As the end of my term approaches, I could not help but recall the situation that existed in 1989. We had an armed conflict that was causing bloodshed throughout the breadth and length of our country, bringing grief and sorrow to the Salvadoran family. We were a polarized society and sectors confronted one another. What is even worse, there was a considerable uprooting of people. Many Salvadorans had to go abroad in search of peace and a way to make a living.

We had an economic situation that could have been characterized as chaotic. During the eighties, which we now describe as the lost decade, our country gradually sank further into an economic abyss. The crisis returned us to the levels that existed in 1960 which, of course, meant higher levels of unemployment and poverty. El Salvador also had problems abroad because it was identified by its violence and by bad things, not as a country that could participate in international meetings or present itself with dignity and respect. In 1989, my friends, our country was immersed in desperation.

When I first addressed you on 1 June 1989, I identified two key issues as the main focuses of my government: The first was to resolve the armed conflict and the second was to correct the chaotic economic situation that prevailed. I chose these two key issues because if we failed to resolve them it would be very difficult to resolve the country's other problems. Devoting the entire national budget to a military effort left no resources to resolve such problems as health, housing, and education. Likewise, with the economic crisis it was impossible to generate jobs and resources to invest in social projects. Thus, it was necessary to emphasize these two issues. It was the only way to overcome the obstacles that were hindering the solution of the country's problems. This is why I made this huge effort.

As I recall these past four and a half years, I believe it would be worth our while to weigh the current situation. At present, our country is no longer at war. Instead, it is increasingly consolidating a peace process and has become an example to the entire world. All of the sectors in our country understand that the mechanism of dialogue prevents confrontations and is the best way to resolve our problems.

For the first time in El Salvador's history, all of the country's many ideological trends will participate in an election, which means that we are consolidating our democracy. Also at present, our economy is healthy and stable, which opens the possibility of investing in that which a government should invest in: social projects.

Although there are numerous examples, suffice it to say that already we have tripled the public health budget and doubled the education budget. In short, we are now able to resolve the problems that are affecting the Salvadoran people. Within the framework of a stable economic situation, considerable confidence has been generated domestically and abroad. This confidence is fostering investment in our country which, in turn, generates new sources of employment; and employment is the best way to pull a person out of extreme poverty.

Internationally, El Salvador is viewed throughout the world as an example of pacification and democracy. However, beyond politics or political openness we now also have economic openness. All of the worldwide financial centers have opened their doors to El Salvador because they believe in and have confidence in our country's responsible economic efforts. This will allow us to rebuild all of the destruction generated by the armed conflict. Now, every Salvadoran can dream of the future; now, our children have space to work and grow; now, El Salvador has a future.

However, looking beyond our accomplishments, we should consider who is responsible for this very significant change. There can be no other conclusion but that all of it is thanks to your support, the support of the entire Salvadoran population, a people who decided on a peace process to rescue the nation. We must remember that our country was torn between a military solution and a political solution. When I took office, I chose one of these two options: the political solution. I was certain that it was the only solution that would be truly lasting and permanent. As of that moment, differences disappeared and I was able to rely on the Salvadoran people's support to successfully culminate the negotiations process which, in 1992, brought us the peace we so desired.

In the area of economics, I remember that once during a message to the nation I said I had two alternatives with which to deal with our difficult economic situation. I could either take the easy way out and continue ruling the country with methods that would create apparent solutions, or I could make the responsible decision to execute actions that would attack the problem at its roots, although I knew this decision implied high costs

and sacrifices. At that time I likened the economy to a seriously ill patient at death's door, to whom we could administer morphine to diminish his pain but who would eventually die. The other alternative was to make the responsible decision to perform surgery which, although painful and with a slow recovery, would allow the patient to survive and regain his health.

It was necessary to make the sacrifice for the sake of a better future for our country and to ensure the possibility of having El Salvador prepared to take off economically and prepared to grow.

My brother Salvadorans, through these thoughts I have confirmed that you, that all Salvadorans, are unquestionably our country's greatest wealth, because without your support I would never have been able to eliminate the obstacles that prevented us from resolving our problems. I know that we still have problems, but a country always has them and they must be resolved. Nevertheless, by eliminating obstacles, our problems are already being resolved.

We are now in a position to resolve our problems because the government has more resources and they are no longer devoted to an armed conflict or demagogic policies, but to those issues to which the nation's efforts should be directed: the effort to ensure all Salvadorans' success and to provide them with safety, education, health, and the necessary opportunities to succeed.

We must make El Salvador a country of opportunities. Therefore, we must have confidence in our country; we must have confidence in our peace process; we must have confidence in all of our democratic institutions, which provide us with freedom. We must continue to have confidence in our development and in our progress as a people.

Beloved fellow Salvadorans, we must have confidence in El Salvador because I am certain that together, all of us together, we will achieve what we have always desired: an El Salvador with peace, progress, and freedom. May God bless you all and may He always bless our beloved El Salvador. Thank you very much and a very good evening to all.

Guatemala

Two Bombs Linked to Mexican Conflict Explode in Capital

PA1001153894 Guatemala City Teleonce Television in Spanish 0330 GMT 10 Jan 94

[From "Telepress" newscast]

[Text] Everything seems to indicate that the internal conflict Mexico has been experiencing over the past week was the main reason behind explosions that occurred in Guatemala City on Sunday evening.

At approximately 2145, two leaflet bombs [bombas panfleteras] exploded a few seconds apart near Espana Plaza. One of the bombs went off at a Mexican restaurant located accross the street from the plaza and the other at the Mexican Consulate in this capital. In the incident at the consulate, the bomb was hurled at the building from 13th Street in Zone 9, between Reforma Avenue and 7th Avenue. Both explosions caused great damage, particularly the bomb at the restaurant, as you can see in this film clip made by the Municipal Firemen's Public Relations Department.

The link between these incidents and the internal conflict in Mexico became evident with the dissemination of leaflets with phrases such as: Let us back the Zapatists! Viva Bishop Samuel Ruiz! Long live the Indian movement! Viva Andres Giron!

The other side of the sheet read: Viva Menchu! The sheet also bore the letterhead of the Peasant Unity Committee [Comite de Unidad Campesina—CUP].

A few days ago, a similar attack was carried out in downtown Mazatenango. Nevertheless, popular organizations are categorically rejecting any link between Guatemalan popular groups and the Mexican guerrillas. They say claims of such links are resulting from a clumsy manipulation of the Mexican problem.

Government Condemns Attack

PA1101035494 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 0126 GMT 11 Jan 94

[Excerpt] Guatemala City, 10 Jan (ACAN-EFE)—The Guatemalan Government today condemned the attack carried out by unidentified individuals on the Mexican Consulate in Guatemala City and offered security to the personnel and the installations.

Guatemalan Government Minister Arnoldo Ortiz Moscoso told the media that the government rejects the use of terrorism as a political weapon and warned that those responsible will be tracked down and "severely" punished. "Terrorism is a crime that is punished by Guatemalan laws and the international treaties to which Guatemala is signatory to," Ortiz said. [passage omitted]

Government, URNG Agree To Resume Peace Talks

PA1101034294 Mexico City NOTIMEX in Spanish 1753 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Text] Mexico City, 10 Jan (NOTIMEX)—It was reported here that the Guatemalan Government and guerrillas agreed here today to continue discussing the topics agreed in Mexico as part of restarting the peace process in that Central American country, which was suspended last year.

The Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) and the government headed by President Ramiro De Leon Carpio will continue to discuss the

topic of human rights at a meeting scheduled for the second half of February. Sources close to the negotiations told NOTIMEX that the delegations agreed to restart the discussion of the agenda of Mexico, which contains substantive and operative topics whose discussion precedes the signing of a peace agreement.

The agenda includes the analysis of substantive topics such as the human rights situation, economic-social and technical-cultural aspects, the problem of land ownership, displaced population, and the constitutional reforms. The operative topics regard the cease-fire, the demobilization of the rebels, and their integration into legal life, according to the same sources.

The parts also agreed to ask the Episcopal Conference to appoint Rodolfo Quezada, bishop of Zacapa, as president of an assembly of civilian sectors that would ratify all the agreements reached by the government and guerrillas.

Another one of the agreements reached today was the appointment of UN representative Jean Arnault as coordinator of the five days of discussions and mediator and overseer of the negotiation process. The URNG and the Guatemalan Government began on 6 January at a hotel in the Mexican capital preliminary meetings convoked by the United Nations to discuss and frame agreement to allow restarting the peace negotiations.

The signing of the agreement is scheduled for 1230 local (1830 GMT) on 10 January.

The Government Commission was headed by Hector Rosada and was made up by Antonio Gonzalez Taracena, deputy chief of staff of the Army; Victor Argueta, commander of the "Honor Guard" military base; and Victor Ventura, director of the technical school. The Government Commission also included Maximiliano Kestler, Mario Permuth, Antonio Arenales, and Victor Viteri.

The URNG delegation was made up by Commanders Pablo Monsanto, Gaspar Ilom, and Rolando Moran, as well as members of the Political-Diplomatic Commission: Luis Becker, Miguel Angel Sandoval, and adviser Vinicio Castaneda.

UN Under Secretary General Marrack Goulding also participated in the discussions.

Menchu Declines Invitation To Mediate in Mexican Crisis

PA1001200394 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 1827 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Text] Guatemala City, 10 Jan (ACAN-EFE)— Today Rigoberta Menchu, the Guatemalan Indian who won the Nobel Peace Prize, turned down the Zapatista National Liberation Army's (EZLN) invitation to mediate in an effort to end the armed insurrection which this group started against the Mexican Government in Chiapas State.

"It would be controversial to play a role in a neighboring state's problem when I have not done it in my own country," Menchu said at a news conference, where she deplored the fact that the Guatemalan Government and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) have not asked her to mediate.

Menchu said she was expressing her view on this matter because of the expectations that had been raised concerning the EZLN proposal, although, she stressed, the request to mediate was not made officially in a written document.

Nicaragua

Legal Assistance Director Reads List of New Cabinet Members

PA1001193494 Managua Radio and Television Networks in Spanish 1500 GMT 10 Jan 94

[List of cabinet members read by Dr. Tomas Delaney, director of the Legal Assistance Department of the Presidency Ministry, during a swearing-in ceremony for the new cabinet at the Presidency in Managua—live]

[Text] Every year on this date, President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro announces the names of the people who make up her cabinet, which includes ministries, autonomous institutions, and other Executive Branch offices.

I must mention that the Environment and Natural Resources Ministry has been created to give environmental issues the importance the deserve. This ministry will replace the Irena [Nicaraguan Natural Resources and Environment Institute], which operated as an autonomous institution. We have also created the Youth and Sports Institute to replace the Nicaraguan Sports Institute. The new institute will retain the autonomy of the old Sports Institute, but will have a different organizational concept, the primary purpose of which will be to promote sports in a more social manner. Greater emphasis will be placed on the promotion of sports for children, communities, and adult recreation.

We must also note the reorganization of the Presidency Ministry with the appointment of three new deputy ministers.

We will now give the names of the cabinet members:

Presidency Ministry: Minister Antonio Lacayo Oyanguren; Deputy Minister Jose Adan Guerra Pastora, who is also private secretary of the presidency; Deputy Minister for State Affairs Tomas Delaney Solis; Deputy Minister for Government Affairs Dayton Caldera Solorzano; Deputy Minister for Civilian Affairs Boanerges Matos Lasso,.

Government Ministry: Minister Alfredo Mendieta Artola; Deputy Minister for Interior Affairs Joaquin Lovo Tellez; Deputy Minister for Citizens Security Affairs Frank Cesar Reyes,.

Foreign Ministry: Minister Ernesto Leal Sanchez; Deputy Minister Jose Bernard Pallais Arana.

Finance Ministry: Minister Emilio Pereira Alegria; Deputy Minister Mirna Somarriba de Bravo; Deputy Minister Rene Vallecillo Quiros.

Social Action Ministry: Minister William Baez Sacasa; Deputy Minister Roberto Guzman Vasquez.

Construction and Transportation Ministry: Minister Pablo Vigil Icaza; Deputy Minister Raul Leclair Lugo; Deputy Minister Edmundo Zuniga Garcia.

Foreign Cooperation Ministry: Minister Erwin Kruger Maltez; Deputy Minister Sergio Mario Blandon Lanzas; Deputy Minister Alfonso Deshon Gomez.

Economy and Development Ministry: Minister Pablo Pereira Gallardo; Deputy Minister Eduardo Belli Pereira; Deputy Minister Enrique Brenes Icabalceta.

Agriculture and Livestock Ministry: Minister Roberto Rondon Sacasa; Deputy Minister Jorge Granera Sacasa; Deputy Minister Julio Rivera Valle.

Health Ministry: Minister Marta Palacios Fernandez; Deputy Minister Federico Munoz Fernandez; Deputy Minister Ignacio Velez Lacayo.

Education Ministry: ...[13-second break in reception]

Labor Ministry: Minister Francisco Rosales Arguello; Deputy Minister Mario Garache Castellon.

Tourism Ministry: Minister Fernando Guzman Cuadra; Deputy Minister Bayardo Garcia Nunez.

Environment and Natural Resources Ministry: Minister Jaime Incer Barquero; Deputy Minister Cesar Aviles Haslam; Deputy Minister Felix Pedro Alfaro Gonzalez.

We must note that Engineer Dayton Caldera, who is the new deputy minister...[27-second break in reception]

Nicaraguan Institute of Energy: Director Emilio Rappaccioli Baltodano; Deputy Director (Otto Schafer Urbina); Deputy Director Jose Ley Law.

Nicaraguan Aqueducts and Sewage Institute: Director Milton Caldera Cardenal; Deputy Director Gustavo Adolfo Martinez Montoya.

Nicaraguan Telecommunications and Postal Services Institute: Director Rolando Rivas.

Nicaraguan Social Security and Welfare Institute: President Simeon Rizo Castellon; Vice President (Oscar Estatajen Somarriba); Vice President Jacinto Mena Espinoza.

Nicaraguan Insurance and Reinsurance Institute: President Carlos Arturo Jarquin Lacayo; Vice President Horacio Raudes Sevilla; Vice President Roberto Canton Alvarez.

Nicaraguan Institute of Municipal Development: President Santiago Ulises Rivas Leclair; Director Agustin Jarquin Anaya.

Nicaraguan Agrarian Reform Institute: Director Alvaro Fiallos Oyanguren; Deputy Director Jorge Byron Alegria Castellon.

Institute of Agrarian Technology: President (Ovidio Saenz Mejia); Director Luis Osorio Garcia.

Nicaraguan Institute of Culture: Director Gladys Ramirez de Espinoza; Deputy Director Maria Jose Arguello Sanson.

National Technological Institute: President Sofonias Cisneros Leiva; Vice President Maria Jose Chevez Urcuyo.

Nicaraguan Institute for the Development of the Autonomous Regions: Director Brooklyn Rivera Bryan; Deputy Director (Owen Hodgson Brandford).

Emergency Fund for Social Development: President Jaime Icabalceta Mayorga; Executive Director Carlos Noguera Pastora.

Superintendency of Banks and Other Financial Institutions: Superintendent Angel Navarro; Deputy Superintendent Danilo Chavarria Aviles.

Nicaraguan Women's Institute: Executive Director Maria Auxiliadora Perez de Matos.

Youth and Sports Institute: President Carlos Garcia Solorzano.

Chamorro Speaks at Ceremony

PA1001193994 Managua Radio and Television Networks in Spanish 1500 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Speech by Nicaraguan President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro during a swearing-in ceremony for the new cabinet at the Presidency in Managua—live]

[Text] Nicaraguan people, members of the cabinet: This 10 January 1994 marks the beginning of the second half of my presidential period. We must be convinced that, beginning today, we will harvest the fruits of the great efforts made by the people and the government in these past few years to secure peace, democracy, and development.

In the beginning of this second half of my presidential period, we have more opportunities for economic growth, a considerable development of social programs, and a better outlook for a greater political, social, and economic stability.

Along our Atlantic coast, the electoral process of the autonomous regions of the northern and southern Atlantic areas—with the participation of the various political parties, alliances, and popular groups—must be institutionalized. Popular elections in our country are

periodic and sacred. In the past, the change of authorities was made through force and violence. Now, we do this in complete freedom with joy and a great civic spirit.

With enthusiasm and renewed optimism, I just announced the cabinet members that will accompany me in 1994—a year whose task will be to reach the noble goals established for 1994. Only in unity, with much perseverance and true teamwork, we will be able to bequeath our citizens a more prosperous Nicaragua and a renewed and stronger state apparatus. It will be a state apparatus that will help strengthen our government institutions.

Public work in Nicaragua has been misunderstood at times and constantly criticized. Many criticize it for political reasons, while others criticize it out of ignorance, because they do not know how difficult it is to build that which has been destroyed and to make progress amid so many obstacles. Many times, we have had to make difficult decisions, decisions that are unpopular. Nevertheless, we must remember that it is not easy to govern. We are always subject to criticism—even criticism that is ill-intentioned. Still, if we want to be honest and consistent rulers, we have to assume our commitment seriously. Presidential decisions should not be made based on political costs but, rather, based on assumed responsibilities. The important thing is to be sincere with the people, always keeping their legitimate interests in mind.

Public work, in addition to involving great sacrifices, must be characterized by honesty, integrity, a devotion to duty, and a love for our people, particularly the neediest sectors. To govern is to serve and fulfill the assigned duty responsibly and patriotically.

Let us make our daily work effective and develop our efforts inspired on national interests only in order that social justice and reconciliation will become a reality for us. They will be the expression of a government that is based on unity, concerted effort, and dialogue.

For this reason, government offices must be open so that all Nicaraguan citizens, regardless of their social or political status, can enter them and be heard respectfully and patiently. For this reason, we must also be willing to implement the postulates of the government program, a program Nicaraguans voted for on 25 February 1990.

I want to sincerely thank all Nicaraguans who accompanied me last year in government posts and who are leaving public office. I also thank the people who will continue to accompany me in the government this year.

I am certain we are going to work in a coordinated fashion and with true patriotic devotion. I hope that God enlightens us and makes us more efficient in our posts to enable us to better serve the Nicaraguan people. Thank you, my dear friends and cabinet members, and may God bless you all. [applause]

Chamorro Speaks at Opening of National Assembly Session

PA1001213594 Managua Radio and Television Networks in Spanish 1520 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Speech by Nicaraguan President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro to the opening session of the 10th legislature at the National Assembly in Managua—live]

[Text] Mr. President of the National Assembly, Messrs. members of the Board of Directors and representatives of the National Assembly, Messrs. members of the branches of government, Messrs. cabinet members, Messrs. members of the diplomatic corps, special guests, Nicaraguans:

In addressing this new legislature today, 10 January 1994, I wish to submit this annual report to the nation by officially closing the first three years of my constitutional mandate and opening the doors to the last three years—the second half of this democratic government, which the Nicaraguan people decided should be headed by Violeta Barrios de Chamorro.

In the past three years we have worked to overcome the harsh reality I found on 25 February 1990, represented by a destroyed and defeated Nicaragua; with dead people who should never have died in war; with mutilated victims who should never have suffered their misfortune; and with a bombed, sabotaged, and simply abandoned infrastructure with an economy greatly weakened by hyperinflation.

We are ending a three-year period which had a very difficult starting point, very different from what I, as president, would have liked to find. It was a reality I could never have imagined, but I decided to face it with a deep sense of historic and patriotic responsibility to save my people from greater suffering. We believed that only with peace and hard work would we be able to overcome whole decades of deterioration.

We are ending three years dedicated to putting the house in order, to clean, and to prepare the land that was full of resentment and hatred and damage caused by physical destruction and economic distortions. They have been three years dedicated to sowing the seeds of reconciliation, dialogue, and concerted efforts. We have been sowing the seeds of a healthy economy, free of deceit and illusions. We have been sowing the seeds of public freedoms and political pluralism. We have spent three years taking care of the seedling, preventing it from being destroyed by the numerous enemies who are afraid of anything that smells like life itself and the future.

We are ending a tough period which in the past year brought us serious difficulties with a poor harvest adversely affected by a severe rainy season and disadvantageous price conditions for our coffee. We also had to deal with rearmed groups from both sides which resisted joining civilian life and who attacked us with kidnappings in the countryside and the city. We had to

face attacks in important cities that left death, pain, and losses. Nicaraguans who love peace and freedom do not share these actions.

That is why I think 1993 tested our democratic commitment and our determination to build a new Nicaragua. Despite great difficulties, we promoted the country's reactivation of solidarity, which I initiated last 10 January, when with great confidence and trust I invited you—honorable representatives, your political parties, associations, labor unions, churches, and everyone—to promote economic growth in favor of the poor. In 1993, we sowed the country's reactivation. This will allow us to harvest an economic growth of approximately 4 percent in 1994, based on an encouraging growth of 20 percent in agriculture activities and 10 percent in fishing activities.

Although it is true that there is a lot to be done, we should be happy to have attained the best rice, bean, corn, soybean, and peanut harvests in the history of our country. We also had a coffee harvest that surpassed 1 million quintals which is the basis to guarantee that the reactivation of coffee in Nicaragua has no way back.

In 1993, we sowed solidarity with new social programs to support the unemployed in the rural and urban sectors. More children attended school and more youths went to training centers. In 1994, this will allow for the harvesting of greater stability and greater community participation in the solution of the grave problems we still have to face.

In 1993, we also promoted the dialogue like in no other year of my government. It was basically promoted among the political parties.

We made substantial progress in the solution of property problems by issuing land titles and making compensation payments. We hope that these specific steps will allow us to harvest greater tolerance, greater consensus, and greater commitment from all with democracy and the de jure system in 1994.

In addition to working for reactivation, solidarity, and dialogue in 1993, we also worked to end, once and for all, the political opportunities and moral pretexts of the armed groups that insisted on their mistaken attitude. We reached our goal based on a just combination of forgiveness and amnesty with the firmness of the Public Force.

Thus, 1993 has been representative of the first half of my presidential mandate: a period of sowing, working, sacrifice, and struggling so that in the second half—without ever thinking that we can rest—we can begin reaping the fruits of the patient sowing season, a time of heroic sacrifices.

Today, we begin the next three years of my government convinced that we will devote our time to reaping the fruits of the great effort we have been making. It is an effort that was shared by all, an effort that will continue in the future because we are certain that we sowed peace, democracy, and development. No one can prevent us from legitimately enjoying our daily work.

In 1994, we will increase economic growth by sowing the land to guarantee a GNP for 1995. We will increase economic growth by using better our resources from the sea and promoting the fishing industry to increase its production. We will increase economic growth by reactivating the construction, mining, and tourism sectors to create more jobs and promote economic activity, as well as to create greater confidence in our common future.

In 1994, we will increase credit volumes for production by 31 percent. More importantly, we will guarantee that this financing will reach the hands of 25,000 new clients to increase the number of beneficiaries by 47 percent compared to the 1993 figure.

To do this, we will have special credits for coffee renewal, cattle breeding and development, tourism, and industrial reconversion, as well as unconventional credit programs for small producers in the rural and urban sectors. This will be done through an expansion in the Program To Support the Micro-Enterprise, PANIC [Progama de Apoyo a la Micro-Empresa]. With this program, we will create and strengthen managerial and technical programs for unconventional credit institutions to promote good policies to channel financial resources and guarantee the democratization of credit, thus allowing small rural and urban businessmen to gain access to it.

With PANIC, we will also promote the implementation of specific projects and programs to support the microenterprise in an effort to increase their productivity and competitiveness. Thus, we will also increase the revenues of small producers in rural and urban areas.

Along with the loans, we will promote public investment, which is a product of the fiscal adjustment efforts we have been carrying out since I took office. Thanks to international cooperation, we are now able to provide the public investment plan with more funds, which will mean a 40 percent increase over last year; this will allow us to create more jobs for the unemployed.

As part of this program and as a result of the reactivation of the Housing Bank, we are beginning an ambitious program to build housing throughout the country. This program will begin to yield results this year by meeting the housing needs of large sectors of our society. In 1994 we hope to build some 7,000 homes in 26 cities throughout the country. A large number of private construction companies will participate in this project, which will in turn generate many new jobs in all 26 cities.

In 1994 we will also continue working to resolve the land ownership problem. We will issue property deeds for 203,000 manzanas that will benefit 9,000 household, who already have their plots but are waiting for the legal papers. These 203,000 manzanas added to the 140,000 manzanas whose deeds my government has already issued draw us closer to the set goal. Through the next

three years we should conclude issuing deeds for 1 million manzanas, which will benefit our farmers.

In addition to issuing deeds for agricultural plots, we will continue working in the urban sector by issuing approximately 25,000 new OOT [Office for the Territorial Organization] solutions to the legal owners of urban lots acknowledged by Law No. 86. These 25,000 solutions, added to the 26,000 [word indistinct] already issued, will draw us closer to the 90,000 requests received. I expect to meet this goal by 1995. Next year we will begin issuing the land deeds for these lots; the families that will benefit deserve this.

We will also make progress this year with the review of 4,200 homes that were acquired through Law No. 85. This year we want to solve the 10,200 [property ownership] cases pending. Of these cases, 6,000 have been reviewed and 4,300 requests have been approved—in principle—in favor of the legitimate beneficiaries. [figures as heard]

Parallel to the issuance of agrarian titles and solvencies to new land and house owners, my government will step up the compensation process by issuing bonds to all those whose properties were unfairly confiscated in the last decade and who were not able to get their properties back—for any of the reasons stipulated in the government program.

The bond compensation system has been in effect 10 months and it has proved that, aside from receiving the international community's recognition, it is an efficient means to restore patrimonial losses. Bonds amounting to 630 million cordobas have been issued and accepted as settlement to numerous applications for compensation and more than 150 million cordobas in transactions have been carried out. This represents 24 percent of the issued bonds. These bonds have been used to purchase assets owned by the state—including enterprises, farms, shares, commercial modules, land, and industrial and farm equipment and spare parts.

We will continue to issue bonds in 1994. These bonds will continue to receive strong and solid support with the offer of state-owned assets and real estate that may be purchased with bonds. Bonds may also be used to pay debts owed to state banks and to purchase 40 percent of the telephone company's shares. This sale will allow us to gather at an earlier date—through weekly public auctions—certificates whose owners wish to voluntarily negotiate them in exchange for cash.

I wish to reassert today that my government is firmly determined to guarantee an offer of assets, as well as mechanisms to use the bonds, in 1994. This will allow the reinstatement of their true financial value. We will manage to repair—in a better way—the patrimonial damage sustained by people whose properties have been confiscated in the measure that they manage to wait for the best opportunity to convert their bonds.

Credits will be used to support production activities, public investment programs, and solutions to the land ownership problem. Two more contributions will be made for training programs and the transfer of agricultural technology to small producers of basic grains, and to repair the first 180 km of roads in production areas, within the REMACAR [expansion unknown] Program. The former will be handled by the new Institute of Agrarian and Livestock Technology [Insta], which begins its work in January with more than 600 technicians and workers; and the latter, the roads, will be handled by the Ministry of Construction and Transportation, which shall repair a total of 700 km during the second phase of my term, within this same program.

Credit and production, public investment and employment, issuance of land titles and compensation, training and road repairs—all these are factors that should allow us to strengthen peace, democracy, and development in 1994.

We have the [words indistinct] confirm the existence of a new geothermal source in our country—in the Malpaisillo zone. This brings us great hope for the nation's geothermal development and the beginning of a major tourism activity in Montelimar and certain zones of Granada, Masaya, Carazo, Rivas, and Rio San Juan. This will offer numerous opportunities to the Nicaraguan economy.

Nonetheless, my commitment does not end with the (?gold) of recovery. It is in solidarity with the poorest, the unemployed, and those affected by natural phenomena. In 1993 the implementation of a community participation (?structure) yielded 97 development committees in an equal number of municipalities so that these groups could present the social needs of their communities to the presidency of the Republic in an orderly fashion. In this manner, I complied with what I spoke about one year ago in this same hall when I said that participation with solidarity would be one of the most important social policy bases.

In 1994 we are going to strengthen the participation of the citizens even more, particularly in the rural areas, so that those who receive the benefits are the ones who will exercise their social [word indistinct] and will watch over the development and maintenance of the social works that this government has launched.

With regard to employment, it is important to mention that in 1994 we will use the established bases for working jointly with the municipal mayoralties in a series of programs that, in addition to increasing employment, will allow the continuity of specific works for the benefit of community development. Mayors throughout the country with various political ideas can attest to the (?initial) answers my government gave in 1993 to the unemployment situations in their towns. We did not solve all of them, but we have prepared the basis for a methodology that in 1994 will duplicate the results for

the benefit of more unemployed people, providing temporary employment to some 24,000 persons each month throughout the nation through the Social Action Ministry. In addition, the Basic Grains Bank will be expanded and improved in 1994, and it will become more efficient so that the farmers who do not have access to formal credit will receive benefits in this alternate system that supports production.

We will also continue with the Emergency Fund for Social Investments, FISE—strengthened with new donations and financing—which will redouble its work for rehabilitating social infrastructures and provide employment in the 1,000 projects we will implement this year in the 143 municipalities of the country.

As president, I am convinced that the most important thing now is to increase production and ensure that the private sector becomes the motor for our country's development. Nonetheless, I want to point out that—as a member of private enterprise—I also understand the small coffee producers of La Dahlia, the small corn producers of Matiguas, and the man who owns a small workshop or produces our beautiful national crafts. For me, all of them are members of private enterprise.

In 1994 we will emphasize support for the small producer so that he will play a more dynamic role in the economic development of the country, in the same manner as large producers. We will provide support to the small producer through the financing that has been approved for this human network of organizations, cooperatives, nongovernmental organizations, [word indistinct] circles, poles of development, and other forms of associations that we have managed to organize in the last two years.

The foundations have already been established. The year 1994 will be the year we will begin to enjoy the results of this initiative. During the past few months I had the opportunity to meet and talk with numerous owners of small farms, cooperative members, mothers' associations [asociaciones de madres], development committees, doctors, nurses, teachers, and other professionals. We inaugurated numerous projects, especially schools and health centers. All these contacts gave me an opportunity to learn what the Nicaraguan people really want. They genuinely want [word indistinct] and work. Before, they wanted peace and reconciliation.

From as distant a place as Isla de Ometepe to Rio Blanco, from the community of Cardenas to [word indistinct], from the city of Juigalpa to Jinotega, from Brooklyn to Chinandega the message was always the same: Mrs. Chamorro, we are now at peace, now we need to produce. In listening to these simple words from a population that does not have access to the media, cannot voice its concern in the newspapers, and whose faces do not appear on television newscasts, I have given instructions for 1994 to be a year of cooperation for production. In this respect we will jointly be able to cut the level of unemployment and advance in a parallel direction along with the economic take-off toward progress with less poverty.

As to education, we plan to continue increasing the number of schools twice as fast as the growth rate in the student population. During 1994, the student population is expected to increase by 3 percent, but we expect to increase the number of schools by 6 percent. This means that the 1,000,070 students registered during 1993 will increase by 63,000 students. The student population is expected to total 1.123 million during 1994. Nevertheless, we are not satisfied with merely increasing student registration, we are also seeking to cut the drop-out rate. That is why we will continue to pay special attention to the primary grades and give them preferential attention as well as maintain the glass of milk program. We also plan to implement teacher improvement programs. In addition, we will continue to promote education decentralization in order to ensure that the state will efficiently continue its role of regulating national education, and for the communities, parents, and teachers to directly participate in the performance and management of their respective educational centers. Through this we expect to encourage full participative democracy and honor Article 118 of the current political Constitution which calls for wide-ranging community participation in the education process.

In the health sector, I must say that following the [words indistinct] the government program, an improvement in medical attention to those insured. Today, I can say to all Nicaraguan workers that the health and medical program which they have been expecting for the past 15 years has finally become a reality. The new social security model went into effect at the end of the past year through duly authorized provisional medical centers already operating in Granada, Masaya, and Managua. We expect to extend this type of medical facility throughout the country. This new form of medical attention for workers, which the state and the private sector initiative are jointly operating, is the formula we have developed which allows us to work and solve the just and simple needs of a population that contributes and makes payments to the Nicaraguan social security system. In order for it to improve, be objective, and grow with [words indistinct], it must be combined with environmental protection programs, as well as the defense of our national patrimony.

From the beginning of my administration, I placed special emphasis on conserving and managing the environment like no other president had ever attempted in the history of our country. In spite of the difficult social and economic challenges we face, we have been analyzing and approving plans aimed at strengthening viable development and rational utilization of natural resources and at protecting the environment.

I have been backed by the municipal governments, peasants, producers, environmental protection organizations, ecologists, and the people, and during the past

three years of democratic work we have created environmental awareness at an unprecedented level in Nicaragua.

Many friendly governments have contributed to this effort and specialized international agencies have unselfishly given us technical assistance and financial support to promote many ecological development proejcts. The same is true for the United Nations. We attended the Earth Summit in Brazil to reaffirm our vocation for peace between man and nature. We are in favor of conciliating production needs and environmental protection.

Now, as a specific manifestation of my political will to back suitable efforts in favor of the environment, we are transforming the Environment and Natural Resources Institute, which this year will celebrate its 15th anniversary, into the Environment and Natural Resources Ministry.

I trust that with the cooperation of all Nicaraguans we will be able to responsibly set in motion, with our eyes on the future, a strategy capable of transforming Nicaragua into an ecologically ordered, environmentally clean, and economically prosperous country.

I hope that what we are starting now will help the entire nation and last forever.

All the plans in favor of production, social solidarity, and environmental protection are not enough. Justice and strength must go hand in hand with these plans. Corruption, smuggling, tax evasion, jewelry thieves, armed bands, and criminals must be persecuted.

The work of the police and the Army has been very important in recent times to guarantee the citizens' security, especially in the countryside. Security has been threatened by armed bands that unfortunately still exist. Our authorities will always vigorously fight these bands, which are engaged in pillaging, attacks, kidnappings, and interrupting harvests. Many policemen and Army officers and soldiers have died in this struggle to return peace and security to the people who live in the Nicaraguan countryside.

Today I want to posthumously acknowledge those who have died in defense of the law and the Constitution and to fully back the police and the Army in their pacification endeavor. This year we will strengthen the Army with a new organic law that should bolster its professionalization process, depoliticize the process for electing its officials, and offer guarantees to the men and women who, with an exalted sense of fatherland, dedicate their lives to serving the nation.

Force must remain under the influence of justice and this is why we are going to work as much as we can for a new Supreme Court of Justice that should begin functioning this year and increase the level of respect for the law throughout the national territory.

The appointment of new officials at the Attorney General's Office, as well as the fact that this week we will send a list of distinguished professionals to the National Assembly from which a new comptroller general of the Republic will be chosen, should be seen as a renewed effort by my government to guarantee stability, bolster the establishment of a state of law, and consolidate the full enjoyment of public liberties in our country—ideals that have motivated my actions as president since 1990.

During these years, my government has tirelessly sought to achieve national stability and harmony between the different political and social forces so that together we can work for the common well-being, the strengthening of democracy, the termination of the last remains of the war, and the best solutions to overcome the economic crisis.

I have always been aware of the fact that without stability there is no prospect for economic growth. It is not easy to govern a country that is still dominated by the sequels of war and political confrontation. However, agreements have been reached thanks to good will.

Today, before you, I wish to praise the patriotic efforts that have produced recent agreements to grant stability to the operation of this National Assembly and bring stability to Nicaragua as well. I wish to offer my personal recognition to all the honorable representatives of the National Assembly who are here today, and to those who have already stated their willingness to undertake their parliamentary tasks later, in order to responsibly assume the popular mandate they received on 25 February 1990.

I am not referring to the voices of those who continue to insist on confrontation from outside this National Assembly, but to those who, like you, have made an effort to end the irrational polarization.

Today we will introduce changes to the composition of the Board of Directors [of the National Assembly], as I have been told, and this fills me with joy because this deed conveys a clear will for understanding. I salute this will and applaud it along with the people of Nicaragua. Therefore, I must give special recognition to Dr. Gustavo Tablada Zelaya for his meritorious work as president of the Legislative corps and for his detached and patriotic contribution to the normalization of the National Assembly.

I also recognize the members of the four blocs that broke the political inertia and were able to reach these agreements for the well-being of Nicaragua. The people will know how to recognize these patriotic contributions to the national stability. My wish is that all the representatives to this National Assembly may fully integrate themselves with the tasks of the legislature that begins today and to give Nicaragua good laws, which is what Nicaragua needs. To remain outside has no sense or justification.

I also applaud the initiative aimed at introducing partial reforms to the Constitution. I will closely follow the

discussion process, and my government, in line with mutual respect for the state governments' independence, will try to contribute with its own criteria to enrich the contents of the reforms.

My aspiration is that the constitutional reforms will be for the good of strengthening national stability and institutions, not to weaken or divide them, and so that democracy will move on a better course and so that democratic continuity will be guaranteed through honest and fair electoral processes. I want to state here that my government supports the changes in the Constitution through partial reforms.

Since the nation's main political forces have been debating diverse positions and mechanisms to reform or change the Constitution, I, as president of the Republic, must express my position on this issue in order to inform the Legislative Assembly and the community. The program that my government is obliged to fulfill has the following main objectives, among others: first, the establishment of a state of law, exercising full democracy and social justice; second, the reaching of a national consensus [words indistinct] to strengthen reconciliation among Nicaraguans and overcome the nation's overall crisis; third, the creation of a government that is essentially civilian, republican, democratic, and representative, based on the nation's unity.

Within those principles and within the framework of the political, economic, and social reality Nicaragua is experiencing, the government must unquestionably support all the corresponding Constitutional reforms and [words indistinct] in keeping with those objectives and these realities. These reforms should be conceived with patriotic goals in mind for the community and the nation's well-being, without taking into account party interests. These reforms should seek to create a wise and lasting Constitution that reflects the Nicaraguan people's true values, ideals, and feelings; it should not just respond to mere passing situations. We should seek a Constitution that is the result of a national consensus in which the people are given the opportunity to express their points of view as a significant contribution in a participant democracy. Therefore, these constitutional reforms should be serious, [word indistinct], and responsible. We cannot ignore the historical opportunity we are offered to draw up a frank and open Constitution through public dialogue.

In my opinion, the call to hold elections for a constituent assembly is not ideal or timely. To dissolve this Legislative Assembly as some wish means the interruption of the people's will at a high economic cost that the nation is not in a position to assume. Some also say that a constituent assembly must not only totally change the Constitution, it must also end, ahead of time, the presidential term. This type of criteria does not represent a willingness for peace but a willingness for confrontation.

The presidential term ends on 10 January 1997. It is my intention to hand over my office to whomever is freely elected in the presidential elections to be held in November 1996. Respect for the presidential term [words indistinct] presidential mandate as a result of free elections, is one of the great contributions that [word indistinct] must make for Nicaragua's democratization.

We start this year by promising it will be better than last year; there are good signs of an improving economy. To attempt to launch the people in a political campaign now is to take away their right to a break and improvement. The holding of elections for a constituent assembly would polarize the community once again, and it would open wounds that still have not been totally closed. It would hold back economic reactivation so longed for in these past three years that has had very high costs and meant big sacrifices. I propose to these parties or political groups still bent on this idea to give the people a political truce. Let us respect their right to a breather and to an opportunity to unite efforts for progress.

Instead of talking about elections, confrontations, and political struggles, let us talk about working; let us talk about production and order; let us talk about fighting unemployment and reconciling ourselves; let us talk about unity so that we can overcome the problems we are confronting. The Nicaraguan people are entitled to have their wishes respected, to be in a better situation. Violence, as well as the calls for violence, must cease once and for all.

I invite the Nicaraguan people—men and women—to work together for peace and stability, harmony, democracy, and progress in our families. We all have a place in this joint effort to build a new Nicaragua with our faith in God and with a spirit filled with reconciliation. Thank you, dear friends of the Legislative Assembly. [applause]

Cosep President Urges UNO To Rejoin National Assembly

PA1101043094 Managua Radio Nicaragua Network in Spanish 1100 GMT 10 Jan 94

[From the "This Morning" newscast]

[Text] Ramiro Gurdian Ortiz, president of the Higher Council of Private Enterprise [Cosep], has urged the National Opposition Union [UNO] deputies to rejoin the National Assembly as of Monday, when the 10th legislative session of the Nicaraguan parliament begins.

During a meeting held this past weekend, the business leader made the request to the 22 deputies who continue with their UNO strategy. Cosep President Gurdian Ortiz pointed out, however, that the businessmen are not taking sides in the strategy by the UNO deputies who are struggling to call for a constituent assembly in Nicaragua.

Central Bank President on 'Totally Honest' Gold Sale, Need for Foreign Aid

PA1001173094 Managua Sistema Nacional de Television Network in Spanish 0100 GMT 6 Jan 94

[Report by Vilma Estrada for the "National News" newscast]

[Text] Central Bank President Jose Evenor Taboada was categorical when he stated that transactions carried out by the government for the sale of gold are totally honest.

[Begin Taboada recording] That is a resource which belongs to the country and should be managed trusting... [pauses] guided by the best conditions in the market, where it should be sold when the market price indicates the gold should be sold—and it should be withheld when the market price is so low that the advisable thing is to withhold the gold. The rest is lack of information on the part of those who have been critical. [end recording]

He emphasized how important it is for the country to sign the [word indistinct] agreement with the World Bank and the IMF.

[Begin Taboada recording] With regard to the IMF, we are talking about $84 million distributed over three years; in the World Bank's case, we are talking about approximately $140 million over a shorter term—but the amount must also be disbursed within a period that does not end in 1994. The signing of those agreements is very important because it means Nicaragua presents a certificate to the international community to prove that we are doing what is necessary to end our dependence on funds from abroad; that we are adopting the measures needed by the economy to eventually end dependence on international cooperation; that we are adopting the necessary measures to effectively activate the country's economic development; and, in sum, that the handling of public finances and various policies is adequate and will allow the country to achieve its full reactivation in the medium term. [end recording]

A delegation is scheduled to arrive in the country in late January, possibly to sign the agreement.

[Begin Taboada recording] It is important to clearly understand that Nicaragua needs this agreement. I believe that anyone who thinks it possible to continue a stable economic policy without those agreements is being unrealistic. Therefore, all Nicaraguan groups should join forces to achieve the best settlement possible within the normal parameters of these negotiations, in which the two parties concede certain things for the sake of achieving the best settlement possible. [end recording]

He announced that $30 million will arrive in the country from Taiwan not later than early February. There will also be aid from the United States—approximately $40 million.

* German Organization Assists Coconut Growers

94P20210C

[Editorial Report] Managua LA PRENSA in Spanish of 14 December 1993 on page 4 reports that the German nongovernmental organization Pro Mundo Humano has established the Cacaonica project on the Atlantic Coast to promote coconut growing. According to Pro Mundo Humano delegate Hans W. Grebe, Cacaonica has helped 400 peasants in El Rama and Waslala. Participants receive tools and materials necessary for planting. The article explains that Pro Mundo Humano trains peasants and enables them to adjust to an "agroforest system." Grebe explains that the Atlantic Coast has 300,000 hectares where coconuts can be grown, and that with the proper storing and marketing techniques prices for Atlantic Coast coconuts will rise. According to the article, the organization is also assisting Waslala residents to construct stoves which burn fuel more efficiently in order to reduce the consumption of wood.

* Evangelicals Withdraw Support From PJN

94P20210B

[Editorial Report] Managua LA PRENSA in Spanish of 15 December 1993 on page 13 reports that Reverend Bartolome Matamoros, president of the Evangelical group Assemblies of God, or Asambleas de Dios, has announced that his group is withdrawing suppport from the National Justice Party, PJN. Matamoros explained that the group is withdrawing support because, while the Assemblies of God requested "a moral commitment from the president of the PJN and other executives...," the executive board of the PJN was promoting "personal interests." In contrast, Matamoros said that Nicaragua needs "open" and "honest" politicians. He also accused PJN leaders of "failing to organize...the more remote areas of the country" during the process to gain legal status.

* Labor Conflicts, Statistics Reported

94P20210A

[Editorial Report] Managua LA PRENSA in Spanish of 19 December 1993 on page 4 reports that over the last three and one-half years the Labor Ministry has dealt with 30,000 labor conflicts. According to a report issued by Labor Minister Francisco Rosales, 80 percent of the conflicts have been resolved. In addition, 989 new labor unions have been formed since 1990, while during the 10 years the Sandinists were in power there were 1,614 unions. The report also explains that there are 2,853 new cooperatives with 73,000 members and capital stock totaling 28 million cordobas. The report praises the use of household surveys which assess the labor market, migration, and child labor.

* Organization Promotes Peace in Chontales

94P20210D

[Editorial Report] Managua BARRICADA in Spanish of 26 December 1993 on page 7 reports that the Instancia de Reflexion, an association which was organized at the end of 1990 by "religious, political, and socioeconomic groups" in Chontales, has helped to resolve land issues and disarm groups in the region. Luis Enrique Figueroa, Sandinist National Liberation Front departmental coordinator, explains that through discussion and the participation of members of the church, the Sandinist People's Army (EPS), mayors, and others, the organization has "neutralized" conflicts between former EPS and Resistance members. Figueroa explains that property issues are more difficult to resolve because deeds are required from the government, which he calls the "Achilles Heel" in conflict resolution. Figueroa hopes that the program "will serve the nation" as a model because relations in Chontales are "friendly, respectful, and fraternal."

Panama

Perez Balladares on Ruling Parties' Alliance Failure

PA1001173394 Panama City LA PRENSA in Spanish 6 Jan 94 p 4a

[Report by Hermes Sucre Serrano]

[Text] The ruling parties' alliance failed because it is made up of parties that have united for "electoral" purposes with the sole objective of grabbing a slice of the "government pie", said Ernesto "Toro" Perez Balladares, presidential candidate for the opposition Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD).

Perez Balladares said the ruling parties have no interest in meeting the people's needs. On the contrary, the only thing that unites them is their desire to continue taking advantage of public finances.

"We don't lose any sleep over alliances because we are interested in sharing our government platform with political parties and organized groups that are interested in serving the people," the PRD leader said.

The PRD presidential candidate made those statements yesterday during a morning radio talk show hosted by radio commentator and journalist Mario Velasquez.

Perez Balladares recalled that alliances were created by former liberal leaders to oppose the candidacy of former president Arnulfo Arias Madrid.

"One party would split into many groups to get more representatives at the polling table, thus making it true that whoever counted the votes would decide who wins," he added.

Regarding the role that the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) will play in the May 1994 elections, Perez Balladares said the Christian Democrats turned out to be a failure because they are not fit to rule, only "to be among the fallen" opposition.

Referring to the Papa Egoro Party and Ruben Blades' candidacy, the PRD leader said Blades is a capable man with good intentions but he lacks political experience. "They are on the right track. They have a meaningful movement that is critical of the status quo, but they lack political realism," he added.

Regarding the renegotiation of military bases proposed by Ruben Carles, Perez Balladares said such a negotiation is unnecessary, because the U.S. people are not even interested in remaining in Panama.

Molirena Legislators Propose Alliance

PA1001201694 Panama City EL PANAMA AMERICA in Spanish 8 Jan 94 p 2A

[Report by Carlos Vargas]

[Text] The Nationalist Liberal Republican Movement (Molirena) legislative faction has proposed the formation of an alliance among all parties that have a democratic and civic vocation, but without "suicidal stubbornness and pseudo-ideological positions," in order to form a presidential ticket "with the most capable and qualified people."

In a news conference held at the Legislative Palace yesterday, Molirena legislators released a communique warning that their proposal "must be implemented urgently because Panamanian democracy is dying and disintegrating with every passing minute."

Molirena faction spokeswoman Gisela Chung said the Molirena legislators' call to unity is to th e Christian Democratic Party, the new parties, and the civic forces that fought for democracy. Chung said the civic forces reached an agreement at the assembly level, but, unfortunately, the same has not been done yet at the leadership level among the ruling parties.

According to Chung, the people are surprised at how little ability the parties have for a constructive dialogue and effective understanding to reach the unity which will prevent the military's return through the civilians, who backed the cruel dictatorship for many years.

"It is not possible therefore that a presidential ticket of the democratic forces cannot be formed because of intransigent and haughty positions, senseless self-deception, inappropriate arrogance, and petty shortsightedness," Chung noted. She said the country's legislators are even willing to give up personal political aspirations and added that they are urging party leaders to contribute.

Argentina

Menem Blames Mexican Chiapas Uprising on 'Mercenaries'

PY1101001094 Buenos Aires NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS in Spanish 2036 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Text] Buenos Aires, 10 Jan (NA)—President Carlos Menem today blamed the appearance of the self-styled Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas on "the presence of many mercenaries and professional subversives."

He also denied the charges pressed by six Mexican human rights organizations of the alleged genocide of civilians, wondering "what could be done if when subversion takes to arms, those who are killing people are said to be preserving human rights."

"Our interpretation is the same we had for the subversion in Argentina, even though the situation is not similar and has deeper connotations, such as the ethnical side. In Argentina, subversion tried to reach power after the declaration of liberated zones such as that in Tucuman," the president said.

In a conversation with journalists accredited to Government House, Menem said the situation in Mexico was not "improvised, because even if at the beginning it appeared to be something unplanned, it was later seen that the EZLN was well organized."

The president admitted that "displeasure" is the main reason for the creation of subversive organizations that "take advantage of this to engage in something broader, which does not meet the people's demands and which upsets legal order."

Menem: Country Will Remove Mines in Falklands, UK Will Pay

PY1101121494 Buenos Aires NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS in Spanish 2010 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Text] Buenos Aires, 10 Jan (NA)—President Carlos Menem announced today that Argentina will remove the mines left in the Malvinas Islands after the past South Atlantic war, but the UK will pay for the work.

The president made these remarks the same day that Vice Foreign Minister Fernando Petrella announced that negotiations instrumental to the mines' removal "might begin after the islands' council informs the UK Government" of the Argentine proposal.

The announcement that the Argentine Government had made an offer to the United Kingdom to sweep the mines left in the archipelago after the 1982 war caused a strong controversy with regard to who would finance the operation.

Menem said today: "It has been established that Argentina will remove the mines, but the UK will pay for it." During a casual chat with journalists accredited to Government House, he added: "The work might cost about $5 million."

Bolivia

President to Attend Mercosur Summit in Uruguay 16-17 Jan

PY1101024794 La Paz Television Nacional Network in Spanish 0100 GMT 11 Jan 94

[Excerpt] President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada will travel to Uruguay to once again try to approach Mercosur [Common Market of the South].

In light of the Andean Pact's inactivity, the previous Bolivian administration tried to join Mercosur. However, during a meeting attended by ex-President Jaime Paz Zamora, the Mercosur presidents said no to Bolivia.

Now, with its new administration, Bolivia will try again.

[Begin Communications Minister Herman Antelo recording, in progress] ...to ask Congress permission to visit the Uruguayan city of Colonia to attend, as a special guest, the Mercosur presidential summit. This meeting will be held on 16 and 17 January. The president deems it very important for Bolivia to attend this summit, because we believe we have to work toward the objective of joining Mercosur with concrete actions, like attending this meeting. The president has thus given official status to his presence as guest at the Mercosur Summit. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Ω * Bolivia: Socioeconomic Briefs

94P20195

[Editorial Report] HOUSING STATISTICS—The Bolivian Government has promised to build 17,500 houses by August 1994 to reach the goal established by the Ministry of Human Development's plan. The project will be financed by international organizaitons including the Inter-American Development Bank which is negotiating $45 million in credits for this purpose. The money is to be administered by the National Housing Fund (FONVI). [Cochabamba LOS TIEMPOS 7 Nov]

The nation's need for more adequate housing was documented in the 1992 National Population and Housing Census which revealed that 50 percent of heads of households did not own their own homes and that the number of homeowners has only increased 3 percent in the past 16 years. During this period, the number of houses doubled in urban areas but rose only 18 percent in rural areas, suggesting increased migration to the cities. The country's main urban centers- -La Paz, Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, Potosi, and Oruro—contain 89 percent of urban housing.

According to official data there are 1,692,567 single family dwellings in the country and 8,575 collective

dwelling units (hospitals, jails, barracks, hotels, convents, etc.). Other figures reveal that 41 percent of Bolivian single family dwellings are overcrowded with rooms shared by three or more people. The situation is exacerbated in urban areas especially in the eastern departments of Beni, Santa Cruz, and Pando. Besides overcrowding, 46 percent of Bolivian households lack access to potable water, 57 percent do not have basic sanitary services, and 45 percent do not have electricity. Most of the households that lack access to potable water are in Pando, Beni, Potosi, and Chuquisaca Departments. [La Paz PRESENCIA 13, 14 Nov]

EDUCATION REFORM, STATISTICS—Vice President Victor Hugo Cardenas announced that the educational reform plan will be launched in 1994 with initial financing of $150 million from the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank. Dr. Enrique Ipina, undersecretary for education and culture in the Ministry of Human Development, highlighted the main points of the plan which is being elaborated by the Technical Support Team for Educational Reform (ETARE). ETARE compiled the following literacy and educational statistics to justify the need for this comprehensive reform "unique to Latin America."

- 20 percent of Bolivians have never attended school and are totally illiterate.
- 30 percent of adults are functionally illiterate.
- 68 percent of illiterate Bolivians are women.
- 70 percent of illiterate Bolivians live in the countryside.
- 60 percent of rural children enroll in school. Of this figure, 70 percent never make it past the first year, with only 1.4 percent of male children and 0.7 percent of female children finishing secondary school.
- 87 percent of urban children attend school. Of this number, 31 percent finish primary school.
- 26 percent of urban female children who entered primary school finish secondary school.

There are 67,555 teachers in Bolivia. Of these, 40,786 (60 percent) are in the cities, and 26,769 (40 percent) are in the countryside.

- 59 percent of teachers (40,409) teach primary school.
- 15.4 percent (10,426) teach secondary school.
- 20.3 percent (13,781) are intermediate school teachers.
- 4.3 percent (2,939) teach preschool or kindergarten.

The teacher-student ratio is 1:18. However, since most teachers are in the cities, there are rural and indigenous communities without a single teacher. Furthermore, a little over half of the rural schools offer only the first three years of primary school. Rural children, therefore, have difficulty finishing even primary school. [Cochabamba LOS TIEMPOS FACETAS Supplement]

According to ETARE, in the last 10 years university enrollment has increased at 7.2 percent per year but only 4.5 percent of those enrolled in a university manage to graduate, and the dropout rate is 15 percent. Other figures reveal that approximately 40,000 secondary school graduates intend to enroll in the country's 23 public and private universities (this year). [La Paz EL DIARIO 10 Nov; PRESENCIA 22 Nov]

Under Secretary Ipina outlined some of the goals of the first four years of the educational reform plan (1994-97) which aims at "transforming the educational system by 100 percent:"

- 7,200 new schools and school councils.
- 1,200 nuclear schools and councils.
- 100 new school districts and nine departmental directorates.
- 50,000 primary school teachers, 500 supervisors, and 720 specialists.
- 1 million children in school: 600,000 in urban areas and 400,000 in rural areas.

[La Paz PRESENCIA DEL PAIS 4 Dec]

CHUQUISACA: RURAL POVERTY, LAND OWNERSHIP—Walter Valda Rivera, director of a Jesuit organization active among the farmers of Tarija, Chuquisaca, and Potosi, and president of the association of nongovernmental organizations in the area, concluded that rural poverty in Chuquisaca Department has been increasing for the past eight years to the point that most rural families in the area "live on the edge of total misery" and that the "quality of life" index is the lowest in the country. In a seminar held by various nongovernmental organizations, he presented a paper analyzing land ownership and production:

- While 300,000 hectares are arable, small farmers cultivate only 149,000 hectares, producing 285,000 metric tons.
- Large landholdings or "latifundios" cover 80 percent of the land, with 355 families owning 666,000 hectares, but most of this land lies fallow.
- Small landholdings or "minifundios" are on the increase, with 60,000 families barely getting by with five hectares or less.
- Internal migration has increased from 5,276 in 1980 to 30,000 farmers leaving the department for La Paz, Sucre, or the interior.
- Illiteracy in many of Chuquisaca's provinces is 80 percent.

Valda blamed the "neoliberal" model for the increasing poverty because it is "incompatible with" the farmers' "communal lifestyle" and "fosters competitiveness, individualism, and selfishness." [La Paz PRESENCIA 30 Nov]

Brazil

Rio Group Executive Secretariat Transferred To Brazil

PY1001122894 Sao Paulo O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO in Portuguese 8 Jan 94 p A6

[From "O Estado column" by Jose Negreiros]

[Text] During a 45-minute audience with [Foreign Minister] Celso Amorim yesterday, Chilean Foreign Minister Enrique Silva Cimma took barely five minutes to transfer the Rio Group Executive Secretariat to Brazil.

The rest of the time was spent reviewing the case of Brazilian citizen Tania Vaz, who has been tortured in Santiago de Chile under the charges of terrorism. Vaz's liberation is almost an obsession for President Itamar Franco.

Labor Minister Walter Barelli Joins PSDB

PY1101121394 Brasilia Radio Nacional da Amazonia Network in Portuguese 0900 GMT 11 Jan 94

[Text] Labor Minister Walter Barelli has joined the PSDB [Brazilian Social Democracy Party], stating that he is not a candidate and he will remain in the government as long as President Itamar Franco wants.

Barelli also defended alliances among parties that follow the same political path, promoting the alliance between the PT [Workers Party] and the PSDB. The main Sao Paulo PSDB leaders participated in the ceremony marking Barelli's affiliation with the PSDB at the party's headquarters.

Chile

President-Elect Frei Undergoes Planned Surgery

PY1001191194 Santiago Television Nacional de Chile Imagen Internacional in Spanish 1700 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Report by Jose Miguel Alfaro from Las Condes Clinic in Santiago—live]

[Text] President-elect Eduardo Frei-Ruiz Tagle underwent surgery this morning. The operation, which was a surprise for many, had been planned for weeks.

[Passage indistinct] state of health of President-elect Eduardo Frei who was operated on this morning. Among them are Commander Angel Izurieta, aide-de camp of President Aylwin; UDI [Independent Democratic Union] Secretary General Domingo Arteaga; and Interior Minister-designate German Correa. The following is an updated report by our colleague Silvia Arteaga:

[Begin recording] [Arteaga] Yesterday, when Senator Frei closed the seminar on Humanism and Democracy, nobody imagined he had planned to be admitted into Las Condes clinic to be operated on for an inguinal hernia on his right side which had been bothering him for the past few months.

[Doctor Sergio Vaisman] This kind of pathology is, in general, light and not very painful, which allowed him to lead a relatively normal life. In fact, the senator went through his whole presidential campaign with minor pain, but he knew he had to undergo surgery and that is why it was scheduled for today.

[Arteaga] The operation, performed by Doctor Juan Reyes, began today at 07:30 this morning. It lasted less than an hour. Only his team, who accompanied him since early in the morning, and his close aides knew about the surgery.

This morning Frei was visited by Senator Mario Papi, a future member of his cabinet, and Deputy Andres Palma. The doctors believe the president-elect will be back to his normal routine in 7 or 10 days. [end recording]

It is thought that President-elect Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle will remain in Las Condes clinic for three days. The next medical bulletin,the second of the day, will be released today at 1730.

Report on International Human Rights, Democracy Conference

PY1001151194 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0009 GMT 9 Jan 94

[Text] Santiago de Chile, 8 Jan (EFE)—Chilean intellectuals and politicians participating in the International Conference on Humanism and Democracy for the 21st Century [Conferencia Internacional Sobre Humanismo y Democracia Para el Siglo XXI] issued a document today in which they state that the knot of the relationship between ethics and politics lies in the promotion and defense of human rights.

European deputies; legislators from various countries; Guillermo Bedregal, the Bolivian Chamber of Deputies president; George Melikjanz [name as received], editor in chief of the Russian newspaper IZVESTIA; former Tunisian Minister Faiza Kefi [name as received]; and other renown intellectuals and politicians from Europe, America, and Africa are participating in this conference.

A group of Chilean center and left-wing politicians presented a document for discussion by the conference that will end on 9 January. It was sponsored by International Christian Democratic Union and the European Union.

The document includes issues such as ethics, politics, and new humanisms; international economy and solidarity; and peace, security, and disarmament.

The document points out that technological change and capital operations represent basic aspects of today's life. In the case of Chilean, this may be translated into the fact that 25 percent of national assets are in the hands of foreign entrepreneurs. This begs the question: How much sovereignty is a state forced to give up if it seeks to attract massive volumes of foreign capital?

The document also indicates that there still is "an overwhelming contrast between the standard of living in rich countries and in poor countries—even though the wealth of the former, to a large extent, has been generated by the work of the latter."

The document adds: "There are regions of our planet which seem to have been deprived of all possible benefits that result from the progress derived from an international free trade system." This is the case, for example, in sub-Saharan Africa where conditions still exist that prick the consciences of the rest of the world." [no opening quotation marks as published]

The document concludes: "The ethical imperative of our times is to create a humanist civilization that will respect mankind and harmoniously integrate him and his fellow men and into the natural, religious, economic, and cultural environs" to prevent him from becoming a "slave of economic, political, and cultural systems that do not respect" the "values and rights" of humanity.

Chilean intellectuals like Roberto Garreton, Carlos Hunneus, and Claudio Troncoso are among the signatories to the document.

'Concern' Over Chileans Convicted of Terrorism in Peru

PY1101024294 Santiago Radio Cooperativa Network in Spanish 2200 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Excerpts] Relatives and friends of the four Chileans who have been convicted in Peru of having allegedly belonged to the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement have asked the Chilean Foreign Ministry to plead their case so that they might have a fair trial and the right to a defense. The names of the Chilean citizens are Jaime Castillo Petruzzi, Maria Concepcion Pincheira Saez, and Lautaro Mellado Saavedra—who have been sentenced to life imprisonment—and Alejandro Astorga Valdez, who was reportedly the only one tried by an ordinary court. According to the relatives of the four Chileans, they were arrested at several different places in Lima, Peru, last 14 October. The last time their mothers saw them, on 3 December, they were being kept in a tiny dark cell and were undernourished. Maria Angelica Mellado reports that irregularities were committed in their trial. She said:

[Begin recording] Despite steps taken by Chilean and foreign authorities, in order that they be tried by a civilian court and the count on high treason be wavered, as they are Chilean citizens, on 7 January three of them were sentenced by a faceless military court to life imprisonment, and to pay indemnification of $50 million to the Peruvian state. This goes against international law. [end recording]

She also reported that the attorneys only had access to the dossiers six hours before judgment was passed. [passage omitted]

Alfonso Rivero, Chilean ambassador to Peru, officially conveyed to the Peruvian Government the Chilean Government's concern about the situation confronting the three Chileans, who have been sentenced to life imprisonment in Peru. [passage omitted]

Colombia

Consul Reports on Downed Venezuelan Helicopter

PA1001221894 Santa Fe de Bogota Emisoras Caracol Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Telephone interview with Hernando Prada Gonzalez, Colombian consul in Guasdualito, Apure State, Venezuela, with unidentified reporters in Santa Fe de Bogota from the "Caracol's 0600 to 0900" newscast—live]

[Text] [Reporter] The Venezuelan Government is investigating the crash of one of its military helicopters on the Colombian side of the border between the two countries. According to General Manuel Andara, Venezuelan acting defense minister, a commission is visiting the border area to establish if the crash was caused by mechanical failure or was attacked by Colombian guerrillas. National Guard members and some peasants, who had been captured—according to complaints on the Colombian side—in Colombian territory, were aboard that helicopter. It was reported in Venezuela that these people were arrested in Venezuela. We are now in contact with Hernando Prada Gonzalez, Colombian consul in the town of Guasdualito, located opposite the Arauca Intendance.

Good morning, please tell us what reports Colombian diplomatic representatives have received from the Venezuelan Government on the helicopter incident?

[Prada] Good morning, on Saturday at 1800 they released Mr. Patino, who was the only person to be held in this border area because of the helicopter accident you mentioned.

[Reporter] Did Mr. Patino say he was captured on Colombian soil?

[Prada] Yes, he said this happened on the Puerto Rico path in Colombia. You have already told the country about this. He was later taken aboard another helicopter to a military base stationed in Guasdualito. Foreign Ministry officials were following the case. On Saturday at 1800, he was turned over to the Arauca military operation command.

[Reporter] In addition to Mr. Patino's report, has your consulate received any other explanation or additional reports from the Venezuelan authorities.

[Prada] No, the only thing we received was Mr. Patino's return. We were told he was held as a witness to the helicopter crash.

[Reporter] We have reports that another Colombian fisherman, besides Mr. Patino, was captured and that the Venezuelans are not reporting on his whereabouts.

[Prada] The consulate has no knowledge of that. We talked with Mr. Patino, and he was the only person flown aboard a helicopter from the crash site to this military garrison.

[Reporter] Colombian authorities are guarding the Venezuelan helicopter. Has Venezuela requested the helicopter's return through you or any other channel?

[Prada] Not at all. The helicopter is in the custody of the Colombian authorities in Colombian territory. No request on the matter has been submitted through this consulate.

[Reporter] Do you think this incident has harmed relations between the two countries in the border area?

[Prada] I do not think so. We are promoting Colombian-Venezuelan integration. The Colombian foreign minister will refer to the incident this week. As far as our relations are concerned, they will remain normal as they have until now.

[Reporter] Is the climate around your office the same? Have you perceived any deterioration in the climate in Guasdualito?

[Prada] None at all.

Ecuador

President Duran-Ballen Makes Changes in Cabinet

PA0701160694 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1527 GMT 7 Jan 94

[Text] Quito, 7 Jan (EFE)—It was officially announced today that Ecuadoran President Sixto Duran-Ballen has changed his ministers of education, social welfare, and industry and commerce and integration, as well as other ranking state officials.

Outgoing Social Welfare Minister Monserrat Butina, accused of nepotism by the opposition, will be replaced by Deputy Alberto Cardenas, a member of the ruling Republican Unity Party.

Education Minister Eduardo Pena, who at the end of 1993 had to deal with a two-month long strike by approximately 100,000 teachers and professors who work for the state, will be replaced by the Education Ministry's Assistant Culture Secretary Rosalia Arteaga.

Industry, Commerce, and Integration Minister Jorge Garcia, who recently criticized several government policies, will be replaced by Jose Vicente Maldonado, who until today held the post of secretary general of the administration.

Maldonado will be replaced by his former assistant secretary Carlos Larreategui.

Cardenas and Maldonado are the third individuals appointed to the Ministries of Social Welfare and Industry, Commerce and Integration, respectively, by Duran-Ballen during his first 18 months in office.

The president also appointed economist Marcel Laniado de Wind as executive director of the National Council of State Modernization.

The announced changes, expected since December, are the result of specific situations faced by the outgoing ministers and not general political changes within the government.

Most of the new officials will take the oath today during a ceremony that will be presided over by Duran-Ballen at Carondelet Palace, the presidential headquarters. The rest will be sworn in within the next few days.

Defense Minister on Efforts To Counter Guerrilla Activity

PA0801000294 Quito Voz de los Andes in Spanish 2300 GMT 6 Jan 94

[From "The Voz Andes" newscast]

[Text] Defense Minister Jose Gallardo appeared before the Congressional Oversight Committee upon a request from Deputy Ricardo Novoa to report on the death of policemen and soldiers along the Putumayo River on 16 December 1993 and to explain why policemen, who are tasked with domestic security operations, were patrolling that area. The minister said they were on a joint Army-Police control operation.

[Begin Gallardo recording] They go upstream and downstream patrolling the Putumayo and San Miguel Rivers. They conduct control operations along the river banks and on vessels navigating the river in an attempt to control and detect drug trafficking activities. [end recording].

The minister confirmed that such activities have been going on for years, and that is why the joint patrols were deployed. The objective is to prevent drug trafficking and guerrilla activities in the northern part of the country, particularly along the Colombian border. The defense minister reaffirmed that the Colombians being held by authorities are the guerrillas who killed the Ecuadoran policemen and soldiers. The guerrillas were found in possession of weapons and jewelry that had belonged to the policemen.

[Begin Gallardo recording] One guerrilla said: My grandfather gave it to me. We went to the grandfather's house and asked him if he had given the guerrilla the watch ten years ago. He said no. Then the guerrilla said he bought it at another place. We went there and he had not bought the watch there, either. The watch belonged to one of the slain men. You must understand that guerrillas do not parade around with weapons and signs saying: I am a guerrilla. They hide their weapons immediately. They wear the clothes of common peasants. Their appearance is completely misleading. [end recording]

The minister said they look like innocent peasants, but they are really guerrillas who operate in the northern part of the country and who are guilty of killing Ecuadoran policemen and soldiers.

Government Continues Nonpayment of Foreign Debt

PA0701125094 Quito Voz de los Andes in Spanish 2300 GMT 6 Jan 94

[From "The Voz Andes" newscast]

[Text] Quito—Ecuador continues to withhold payments to commercial creditor banks, thereby increasing its overall foreign debt each month. As of September 1993 Ecuador's foreign debt was $12.6 billion. According to the latest report from the Central Bank, the Ecuadoran foreign debt increased 0.4 percent in September. In the first nine months of 1993 it increased approximately 4 percent. According to the same source, in September the foreign debt, including unpaid interest, reached $12.6 billion, compared to $12.55 billion in August and $12.122 billion in December 1992.

Paraguay

Army Publication: Wasmosy Receives 'Orders' From Oviedo

PY1001154294 Asuncion NOTICIAS in Spanish 10 Jan 94 p 6

[Text] "Army News," an official publication of the Paraguayan Army, says that engineer Juan Carlos Wasmosy, the president of the Republic and commander in chief of the Armed Forces, is following orders from Armed Forces generals over the appointment of Cavalry officers.

The December issue of "Army News" carries a report elaborating on the latest changes in the military field. Beside mentioning [Army Commander] General Lino Oviedo in most articles, the publication reports that Wasmosy received instructions over some appointments in the Cavalry divisions.

The publication notes that the president and commander in chief of the Paraguayan Armed Forces appointed the new 3d Cavalry Division chief of staff, "on the orders" of the Army, which is headed by Gen. Lino Cesar Oviedo, the Army commander.

The text is as follows: "Engineer Juan Carlos Wasmosy, in his capacity as commander in chief of the Paraguayan Armed Forces, appointed DEM [General Staff School graduate] Colonel Enrique Montiel G. as chief of staff of the 3d Cavalry Division on the orders of General Rodrigo Diaz Delmas, the 1st Army Corps Commander, through orders issued by Gen. Lino Oviedo, the Paraguayan Army commander ..." A facsimile of this report, which appears on page 7 of the December issue of "Army News," is published on this page.

In the aforementioned publication's center page, Gen. Oviedo is quoted as saying he will build "one school per year to save Paraguay from poverty." The publication did not specify, however, with what funds he will build schools. There is a picture of the general awarding medals to high school graduates in the interior of the country.

Deputy Denounces Government Threat To Take Over Party

PY1001210694 Asuncion ULTIMA HORA in Spanish 10 Jan 94 p 4

[Text] Deputy Ismael Echague [Colorado Party—Concepcion] this morning denounced that "at approximately 2000 local time, on the eve of Blas N. Riquelme's resignation from office as Colorado Party president, we received a message from Government House to the effect that the [Colorado Party] Executive Board would be taken over and [Second Vice President Juan Manuel] Cano Melgarejo would be named party chairman unless Riquelme tendered his resignation."

Ecahgue, a member of Riquelme's faction within the party, further stated that one of the conditions for Riquelme's resignation—imposed by Riquelme himself—was that he would be replaced by Eugenio Sanabria Cantero, the party's first vice president.

Echague concluded by saying that "the pressure exerted from Government House was the main factor determining the former president's resignation, especially if one bears in mind that ministers and high-ranking government officials were already in favor of this proposal at that time."

Peru

Officials Cited on Friction With U.S. Over Human Rights

PA1001192494 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1536 GMT 10 Jan 94

[Text] Lima, 10 Jan (EFE)—The human rights situation in Peru will be one of the main topics Alexander Watson, U.S. assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, will discuss during his visit to Lima next week. Meanwhile, friction between the two countries continues over this issue.

Opposition lawmaker Manuel Moreyra said today "serious difficulties exist" between Peru and the United States over the human rights issue. These difficulties, according to Moreyra, are reflected in the the United States' freezing of $105 million which it should have given Peru as a member of the second Support Group on the condition that Lima had to show an improvement in human rights in its territory.

Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori stated on Sunday he hopes the "United States will keep the pledge made

when the Support Group was created, because that $105 million has not been disbursed yet."

In this respect, Fujimori added, "I hope to meet all of the goals established by international organizations." The Peruvian president confirmed Watson will visit Lima 18-21 January "surely to engage in a direct review." He added that Watson must not only review the human rights situation but also that of civil and social rights, as well as Peru's right to achieve peace in the face of the political violence that has raged for more than 13 years.

Political observers indicated today that besides the topic of human rights, Watson, who served as ambassador in Peru from 1986 to 1989, will discuss matters dealing with possible ways to improve the war on drug trafficking, progress in the nation's democratic institutional life following the "self-inflicted" coup of 5 April 1992, and advances to make the judicial branch more independent.

On this last point, Justice Minister Fernando Vega Santa Gadea today said, "we are trying to enforce respect for human rights as much as possible" in Peru. Talking to local radio station Radio Programas del Peru, Vega Santa Gadea admitted he had refused to meet with the Goldman Commission from the United States, which investigated the human rights situation in Peru and its judicial system.

The commission, which arrived in Peru in early December, was chaired by lawyer Roberto Goldman of Washington's American University, asked to meet with the minister through Charles Brayshaw, the U.S. charge d'affaires in Lima.

Vega Santa Gadea stated today that Brayshaw's letter "was unacceptable to a sovereign country, and he added "I do not let anyone come to tell me how I must run our justice system"—something that constitutes meddling in the internal affairs of the country.

In August 1993, the Goldman Commission visited Peru and drafted a 150-page report, which the business newspaper GESTION described today, citing government sources, as "totally and absolutely biased" and full of preconceptions.

Meanwhile, the Peruvian congressional Human Rights Committee has drafted a report on 12 cases of human rights violations cited by the U.S. State Department, which range from mass murders in the country's jails in 1986, during the government of Alan Garcia (1985-90), to the murders of residents in the town of Cayara (Ayacucho Department) in 1988. It also includes the death of 16 peasants in Iquicha (Ayacucho) in 1990, the murders of journalist Hugo Bustios (1988) and Fernando Mejia, a lawyer of peasant communities, and others.

Shining Path 'Leader' Rejects Guzman's Orders

PA1101031394 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0144 GMT 11 Jan 94

[Text] Lima, 10 Jan (EFE)—According to a report published today in the Lima magazine SI, the terrorist violence that persists in Peru is led by Oscar Ramirez Durand, alias "Feliciano," who has rejected the leadership of Abimael Guzman, the founder of the Maoist Shining Path who is in favor of a peace agreement.

The rejection by Ramirez Durand of the orders of Guzman, who is the top leader and is considered the "guiding thought" of the terrorist organization, has led this group to a schism which is analyzed by the political weekly publication. The report states that while Guzman seeks to put an end to the "people's war" with his petitions for a peace agreement with Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, "Feliciano" and his followers advocate a continuation of violence.

Ramirez, who is considered the number three man of the group after Guzman and his mistress Elena Iparraguirre—who are both sentenced to life imprisonment—has become the leader of those who follow him and who now disavow the leadership of the Shining Path founder. According to the magazine, the dissidents today recognize "Feliciano" as the new "president" of the Shining Path. For them, Guzman no longer is "President Gonzalo," and he has become "just another prisoner."

The attacks that took place in Lima during the last week of December and the first week of January—including the detonation of car bombs in the Prefecture (Civil Government) of Lima that left over 20 injured and considerable damage—are attributed to this radical group.

The weekly publication feels that this "recalcitrant" group of Shining Path was formed by the union of the People's Aid of Peru—a Shining Path group that supported armed actions and provided all types of assistance to the activists—with the Metropolitan Committee that has formed a Regional Directorate. According to the report, this directorate would come under a central committee that has been reorganized under the leadership of Ramirez Durand.

The report adds that in Lima, four special detachments have been organized by the veterans in the terrorist struggle, and that only one of them—the one in the eastern area of the city—is reportedly engaging in military actions, while the others are conducting political activities to recruit new militants.

In October of 1993, three weeks after Abimael Guzman sent the first letter from prison to the Peruvian president asking him to hold talks for a peace agreement, in more than one town of Puno Department, southeast of Lima, there appeared signs that read: "Viva President Feliciano."

The weekly adds that, later, in the jungle region of Tingo Maria, a Shining Path column stopped a passenger vehicle and one of the members told them that "Feliciano" had assumed leadership of the organization because "Guzman is no longer President Gonzalo, because he is a traitor to the revolutionary cause." "We do not agree with the letter of surrender. To the contrary, we will continue to struggle," the Shining Path member reportedly said.

SI states that the reports show "two lines, two directions, two currents," and that the other one is that made up of 2,500 Shining Path members, who are being held in 10 prisons in the country. Abimael Guzman exercises control over them. It adds that Guzman has managed to retain the loyalty of that group, due to a project begun three months ago when the two letters in which he asked Fujimori for peace were made public.

The magazine states that the Shining Path leader obtained the transfer from Yanamayo Prison (in Puno) to Lima of several leaders, including Osman Morote, Martha Huatay, Victor Zavala, and Maria Pantoja. Guzman instructed the imprisoned militants at a meeting in the Naval Base where he is being held to persuade the imprisoned members to accept the request for peace.

Shining Path members who are being held in the prisons of Santa Monica and Canto Grande of Lima and Yanamayo Prison in Puno have expressed support for Abimael Guzman's peace request.

Drug Producing, Trafficking Spreads Throughout Country

PA1001221194 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1536 GMT 7 Jan 94

[Text] Lima, 7 Jan (EFE)—Drug trafficking is spreading throughout Peru. Today there was a report on the discovery of pits for soaking coca leaves and making basic cocaine paste in areas of the country previously untouched by drug trafficking.

According to newspaper reports, four soaking pits were discovered in a house in Puerto Maldonado, the capital of the jungle department of Madre de Dios, which borders Brazil and Bolivia.

The discovery, which was made by the General Narcotics Directorate, has confirmed reports that drug traffickers—who may have expanded their operations from Ayacucho to Cuzco in the Andean region—are moving to Madre de Dios.

Authorities arrested the owner of the house and seized precursor chemicals such as ammonia and kerosene used to make basic paste.

Peru is the world's largest producer of the coca leaf, the raw material for cocaine, followed by Bolivia.

The newspaper EXPRESO also revealed today that an Army colonel and commander are currently on trial for keeping 114 kg of basic cocaine paste seized in a 1992 counternarcotics operation in the Huallaga River Valley in the northern jungle department of San Martin, an area known for drug trafficking.

The newspaper identified the officers as Colonel Eduardo Alvarado and Commander Walter Bue, who were accused by General Eduardo Bellido, who was chief of the Huallaga Front's political-military command at the time of the operation.

There are two other drug-trafficking cases in this same area that presumably involve an Army noncommissioned officer and a National Police officer.

It was also reported today that the Peruvian Navy discharged two officers and a technician who were arrested by the New Orleans Police (United States) for carrying pure cocaine.

Lima's EL COMERCIO newspaper revealed today that three sailors were arrested on 19 November 1993 in New Orleans after disembarking from the Navy vessel Ilo. The Navy members were identified as Jorge Saldias, Raul Baylon, and William Tello.

Based on a confidential report by the National Police Narcotics Intelligence Department, EL COMERCIO revealed on 3 January that the production of washed basic cocaine paste in the country for 1993 reached 600 tons.

According to the report, not even 1 percent of that amount produced in Peruvian cocaine-producing areas—specifically, the Peruvian central jungle and the Huallaga River Valley—was seized during 1993.

The drug traffickers used over 2 million tons of basic paste to produce 600 tons of basic cocaine paste, which is subsequently washed to be "exported" by light Colombian planes flying to Peru.

The new development is that cocaine farmers not only grow the plant but also make the raw basic paste from the leaves they soak. They then take the paste to storage centers designated by Peruvian drug traffickers to be shipped to Colombia by light planes or crafts.

In addition to the Huallaga River Valley, the basic paste is produced in the Mayo River Valley, San Martin Department and Alto Maranon River, Amazonas Department—both of which are located in the country's northern jungle, and in the areas between the Ene and Apurimac Rivers in the central jungle.

Other major cocaine areas include those of Puerto Inca and Puerto Bermudez in the jungle of Pasco Department in the Peruvian central mountain range.

Venezuela

Minister Announces VAT Executive Decree, Price Ceilings

PA1001180694 Caracas Venezolana de Television Network in Spanish 1556 GMT 10 Jan 94

[From "The News" newscast]

[Text] Development Minister Gustavo Perez Mijares announced an executive decree that will go into effect on 1 March on measures to be taken in the implementation of the value-added tax, VAT, to avoid speculation by certain merchants.

[Begin Perez recording] Whereas it is the national government's duty to guide, defend, and deter speculation and undue price increases and to protect and safeguard the consumers' rights and interests, it is hereby decreed:

Article 1.

Starting on the day this decree is published, the following articles will be considered basic products throughout the country: precooked corn flour, yellow and white precooked corn flour, domestic all-purpose wheat flour, industrial-use wheat flour, industrial-use wheat semolina, bread, food pasta, table rice, domestically produced powdered milk, canned or packed sardines, vegetable-based cooking oil, sugar, brown sugar, medicine, and blue soap in bars.

Article 2.

The Development Ministry will issue a resolution setting the highest acceptable selling price for the aforementioned articles. The prices must be exhibited in lists or on posters that can be seen by consumers in the stores.

Article 3.

The selling prices that have been marked or printed on the aforementioned basic products at the time this decree goes into effect will be respected if they are not higher than the ones set by the corresponding organization.

Article 4.

This is where the penalization begins. The purveyors who violate Article 2 of this decree will be penalized with fines of up to 2 million bolivares [B].

Article 5.

Anyone violating Article 3 of this decree or the regulations dictated to implement it will be penalized with fines of up to B2 million, and their stores can be closed for up to 30 days.

Article 6.

Those who restrict the circulation or distribution of the goods declared basic products in this decree will be penalized with fines of up to B2 million, and their stores can be closed for up to 30 days.

Article 7.

Purveyors who engage in the crimes of speculation and hoarding will be arrested and held for six to 60 days, the period to be determined by the corresponding regular court of law in accordance with Article 106 of the consumer protection law.

Article 8.

The Development Ministry is in charge of the implementation of this decree.

I will now read the prices set for the aforementioned basic products: precooked white or yellow corn flour, B55 per kg; regular all-purpose wheat flour, B62; [word indistinct] all-purpose wheat flour, B63; industrial-use wheat flour, B2,700 for a 45-kg sack; wheat semolina, B2,800 for a 45-kg sack; premium-quality food pasta, B120 per kg; economic-quality food pasta, B115; 150-gram loaf of bread, B20 minimum; 300-gram peasant bread, B35 minimum; table rice with 5 percent broken grains, B58; national powdered milk, B400 for 1 kg; 170-gm oil-packed sardines, B30; tomato-packed sardines, B26; hot sauce-packed sardines, B26; vegetable-based cooking oil, B140 per liter; sugar, B65 per kg; brown sugar, B55; and a blue soap bar, B20.

The Health and Social Welfare Ministry and the Development Ministry will issue a special resolution for medicine prices after Dr. Pablo Pulido and I contact the National Medicine Council. [end recording]

* Distribution of Household Spending Detailed

94SM0151A Caracas EL UNIVERSAL in Spanish 28 Nov 93 Section 2 p 1

[Article by Alfredo Carquez Saavedra]

[Text] The growing need to spend a large part of family budgets on the absolutely essential needs for subsistence, particularly foodstuffs, has become one of the most serious obstacles preventing the citizens of Venezuela from gaining access to their own housing.

According to a study coordinated and financed by the Latin American Social Research Institute (ILDIS) and the State Reform Commission (COPRE), carried out by sociologist Enma de Ghinaglia, and included in the social agenda for the nineties, "the distribution of family expenditures may be an important indicator for gaining an understanding of what portion of income is committed to meeting subsistence needs, and what proportion could be allocated to other need categories, including housing."

According to this work, this indicator would be variable and would be manifested differently in the various strata of the population, depending on the development of inflation and the mobility in the earning of income.

Enma de Ghinaglia notes that according to the family budget survey carried out by the Central Bank of Venezuela, poor households spent 50 percent of their income on food in 1989, while the figures for the middle and upper strata were 42 and 31 percent, respectively.

This situation would seem to have deteriorated in the 1990's, because the document in question says that "the portion of their expenditures the poorest households allocated for food came to 68 percent of the family budgets in 1992."

On this point, it is also noted that at the present time the lowest strata (D and E) no longer have available the 15 percent they formerly devoted to basic housing maintenance.

The Unattainable Ceiling

The work by Ghinaglia says that according to the data provided by the 1990 Population and Census Housing, a gross housing deficit of 880,083 units still existed. This figure included 459,157 units deemed unacceptable, based on their "physical-structural" condition, and 420,926 housing units being shared by several families (functional deficit).

Based on certain indicators such as the purchasing power of Venezuelan families, the study stratified current housing needs in terms of possible availability and family expectations.

—Stratum I. The insolvent category, made up of families with incomes below the minimum monthly wage (9,000 bolivares). This category includes 21 percent of the households that are below the extreme poverty line (743,358 households). Satisfaction of the housing needs of families in this category is postponed because of the primary requirement of meeting survival needs.

—Stratum II. This category is made up of barely solvent families with monthly incomes ranging between one and three times the minimum wage (between 9,000 and 27,000 bolivares). This category includes 49 percent of the households in the country (1,741,774) hovering on the poverty line. For this group as well, the need to provide other basic necessities overrides the need to resolve this problem.

—Stratum III. This category is made up of families with average solvency and earning monthly incomes ranging between three and five times the basic wage (between 27,000 and 45,000 bolivares). This category includes 23 percent of the households (835,011). These families have a limited portion of their own resources available. Here, housing is an urgent need.

—Stratum IV. This category is made up of solvent families with incomes ranging between five and 10 times the minimum monthly wage (between 45,000 and 90,000 bolivares). It includes 6 percent of the households (200,553). Relatively speaking, these families' needs are satisfied. Housing plays an important role in family life.

—Stratum V. This category is made up of highly solvent families with incomes exceeding 10 times the minimum monthly wage. Only 1 percent of the households (40,270) are included in this category. These families are able to satisfy a broad range of needs. Housing is even perceived as a status symbol and as an investment.

One of the phenomena brought out by this study is the imbalance in housing demand, since "it can be seen that the solvent strata absorb the supply intended for the weaker or less solvent strata."

Among the factors believed to affect this phenomenon are the following:

- The impossibly high prices, in terms of purchasing capacity.
- The disparity between types of housing and family expectations.
- The lack of resources to meet the needs of Strata I and III, according to the provisions of the Housing Policy Law.
- The high inflation rates.
- Various legal restrictions.

With the implementation of the Housing Policy Law, this sociologist says, 98.587 billion bolivares have been allocated to this sector in the past three years. Of this sum, 70 percent was designated for Assistance Area I in the law. It is expected that a total of 38.822 billion bolivares will be allocated for the financing of the law in 1993.

Between 1990 and 1992, the total number of units produced was 186,111. This result, the researcher comments, would seem limited to the production of housing units in the formal sector, "if the volume of the resources allocated to Areas I and III is compared with the results achieved in the effective period for the Housing Policy Law and the magnitude of the needs of the families."

* Regional Fund Grants Development Loans

94SM0151B Caracas EL UNIVERSAL in Spanish 2 Dec 93 Section 2 p 1

[Text] At the Eighth Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Andean Development Corporation (CAF), two loans to the Venezuelan energy sector totaling $62 million were approved.

Enrique Garcia, the president of this regional financial body, explained that one of the loans, in the amount of $50 million, will be used for the construction of the Caruachi Hydroelectric Plant. It will have an installed capacity of 2,160 megawatts and will produce an average energy volume of 13,300 gigawatt/hours annually for incorporation in the interconnected national system.

The second loan, in the amount of $12 million, will be used for the cofinancing of the construction and commissioning of another plant, Macagua II, a project begun in 1987, Garcia said.

"The corporation allocated $33 million for this plant in 1992. It is planned as a continuation of Macagua I, and includes projects for the control of the Caroni River, for creating a reservoir, and for increasing the generating capacity by regulating the flow reaching the final stretch of the Guri. With a nominal capacity of 2,548 megawatts, it is expected that the first generating units at this plant will be commissioned next year, and the last ones in 1997." These projects fall within the areas designated as priorities by the CAF, Garcia said, since they will contribute to meeting the increasing demand of the nation and the Venezuelan industrial export sector for electrical energy. Currently, the EDELCA [Caroni River Electrification Project] owns and operates two hydroelectric plants on the Caroni. They are Macagua I and the Raul Leoni Power Plant (Guri), the second largest in the world.

These power plants have made it possible to develop heavy industry in the Guayana region of Venezuela, in addition to meeting more than 70 percent of the domestic demand for electrical energy.

The recent meeting of the CAF Board of Directors also approved the grant of a loan of $70 million to the Republic of Venezuela to cofinance a program designed to manage and preserve the primary highway network. The execution of the program will be the responsibility of the Ministry of Transport and Communications (MTC).

Enrique Garcia explained that this project (Highway III) is of vital importance to the country because the 36,000 kilometers in the principal highway network in Venezuela have deteriorated, in terms of both the surfaces (pavement layers, drainage facilities, bridges, and tunnels) and the signaling and safety aspects.

"This project, the total cost of which will come to $852 million, involves a multiple-investment plan to be implemented between 1994 and 1998, with three principal components—institutional strengthening, maintenance, and investments—as its basis."

Garcia noted that the financing will be provided by the Inter-American Development Bank ($200 million), the World Bank ($150 million), the MTC ($432 million), and the CAF. On this basis, the plans call for the rehabilitation of more than 2,000 kilometers of roads, 730 bridges, and some 150 kilometers of tunnels; for major maintenance work on some 3,200 kilometers of roadway; and for the purchase of equipment to be used in the supervision of the work and the signaling system.

The program will be implemented by the MTC through the General Sectorial Highway System Office, the president of the corporation stated. However, some projects may be handled by the state administrations, since it is they who bear the responsibility for road maintenance. A decentralization agreement is being signed by the central government and the states.

Another loan of $20 million approved by the CAF will go to a private business, Manufacturas de Papel, C.A. [Paper Manufacturing, Inc.] (MANPA) for the design and production of a machine (Machine Project 8) to produce various types of toilet paper.

"This project is being executed on the premises of the Maracay Paper Factory, located in the State of Aragua. This is a business belonging to the Delfino Group, which has been a leader in paper manufacturing since 1912. It has the capacity to produce 50,000 tons of tissue paper annually, which satisfies about 40 percent of the domestic market demand. The surplus production is exported."

Garcia emphasized that with the launching of this project, the hope is to increase production by about 27,000 metric tons per year, enabling MANPA to satisfy the increase in demand on both the national and the international levels, particularly in the Latin American and Caribbean areas.

Guyana

Trade Union Congress Reschedules Protest for 13 Jan

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[Text] Georgetown, Guyana, 10 Jan, CANA—The umbrella Guyana Trades Union Congress (TUC) has rescheduled to Thursday [13 January] a march and rally to protest low wages and increases in electricity charges. The group, which has been pressing the government for increased public sector wages beyond a 20 percent increase awarded last year, announced the new date after heavy rains washed out plans for the protest last Friday.

TUC, in collaboration with the Guyana Consumers Association, has also led opposition to increased electricity charges, including a planned 400 Guyana dollars (one Guyana dollar = approx. 0.78 U.S. cents) minimum charge which has since been scrapped by the power company.

The Guyana Electricity Corporation (GEC) has, however, gone ahead with a 25-percent hike in electricity rates as of January, and a further 25-percent hike is proposed from July.

Thursday's rally at the John Ford Car Park in central Georgetown will be addressed by TUC president Lincoln Lewis, Public Service Union (PSU) general secretary Susan Moore, and National Association of Agricultural, Commercial, and Industrial Employees (NAACIE) advisor N.K. Gopaul.

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